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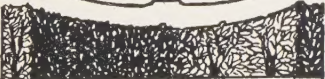




JESUS  
OR  
PAUL?



BY  
DR. ARNOLD  
MEYER



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# JESUS OR PAUL?

BY

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THIS beautiful book belongs to a class of works that have lately appeared in Germany, and form a most significant feature in the theological world of to-day. We see from them that distinguished members of the great critical school, which during the last half-century has done so much by means of literary and historical study of the documents to increase our knowledge of early Christian history, are now devoting their attention to a question of supreme importance to the great body of Christian people—namely, the question of our spiritual relationship to the great events of those early days. These scholars are now taking stock of the results of criticism as they affect the faith of the Christian, and are attempting to lay the foundation of a practical Christian teaching that is abreast of the moral and intellectual requirements of our days.

It is in relation with this new movement that this book, which now appears for the first time in English form, should be judged. It is quite possible that the reader may feel that some of

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its statements as to the results of criticism are liable to objection, though all those who are acquainted with these questions, and with other works of the distinguished author, will perceive that such statements rest upon a profound knowledge of the writings of the New Testament. It is, however, the spirit and the method of the book which claim attention. The spirit is distinctly religious; its method is that of a scientific historian who brings the clear, cold light of criticism to bear upon the records of past events, who will not suffer any spiritual interpretation of those events to affect his judgment of the way in which they actually occurred. This it is which makes the book so valuable—one, indeed, that may well serve as a model of the way in which all such investigations should be conducted.

Perhaps the greatest opposition will be aroused by the attitude which the author adopts towards the doctrine of the Divinity of our Lord. He emphasises the instances which tend to show that the whole life, the ideas and teaching, of our Lord were subject to human limitations and were dependent upon contemporary Jewish thought; and he regards these historical facts as inconsistent with the belief in the Divinity of our Lord which the Church owes, above all, to St. Paul.

Here the method of the author has at least one notable result; for the more exclusively

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## PREFACE

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the life of our Lord is studied from the purely human standpoint the nobler and grander does that life appear, the more clearly does it shine out in perfect moral beauty against the background of the contemporary ideals by which it was influenced. I would here only refer to the author's interpretation of the scene in Gethsemane. This interpretation may not commend itself to some readers, but it surely assigns the very highest spiritual excellence to Him "Who then learned to dispense with every definite form of faith and to submit Himself to the Will of God, even though it was to Him unintelligible."

Again, the argument of the book, the sting of its polemic—if one may use such an expression of a book that is not written in a controversial spirit—is directed against such a faith in the Divinity of our Lord as would exclude a belief in His absolute Humanity and would deny that His earthly life was wholly subject to the laws that govern human life and development. But must we so believe? Is our knowledge of the mysteries of personality, human and divine, so complete that we can impose our philosophical theories upon the method of Divine Revelation? If in Christ God was manifest in the flesh, have we any right to say that that life in the flesh could not have been entirely subject to the ordinary laws of human life? Must we assume that He

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knew that He was Divine, that He had Divine foreknowledge of the course of His earthly career, and so was spared those trials of faith that are among the bitterest that His disciples must endure? Have we such right to set limits to His emptying Himself of His glory? Why may it not be that our Divine Saviour was ever a problem to Himself, that He could only explain to Himself the mystery of His Personality in terms of the Messianic beliefs of His times? Why may not God have revealed Himself in His saving love in a simple human life lived out under all the limitations of contemporary thought and feeling? Why may not all in Jesus have been absolutely human, and yet His whole Personality be Divine?

It is in connection with questions such as these that the method of this book is so peculiarly valuable in its opposition to a prevailing tendency to draw an unscientific and unreal distinction between what is Divine and what is human in Jesus. In the interests of scientific history, and also of practical religion, it distinguishes only between what is essential and what is accidental in Jesus, between what belongs to the inmost soul of His Personality and what belongs to the transitory expression of that Personality under the intellectual and social limitations of a certain period in the history of mankind. We thus realise that the Law of Christianity, the abiding standard



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of discipleship, does not lie in the mere words and actions of our Saviour, but in the Personality of which those words and actions are the temporal and imperfect revelation.

Jesus was the founder of Christianity ; for in His Personality God is manifested to us as the object of our adoring worship. He did not ask, nor could He as true Man think of asking, that men should worship Him ; He could only call upon men to follow Him. It was St. Paul who, above all others, first expressed the inmost heart of believers as they gaze upon the earthly life of the Master. The forms of St. Paul's doctrine belong, indeed, to the past ; but in the attitude of his soul towards our Lord we discern the vital principle of Christianity. In the words of our author, it was St. Paul who showed the world what Jesus had given.

J. R. W.



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# JESUS OR PAUL?

## THE PROBLEM

WHO was the Founder of Christianity? One naturally at once answers—Christ, of course—He from Whom the religion takes its name. But this name only points in the first place to the fact that the disciples of Jesus regarded Him during His lifetime as the expected Messiah, that He also Himself, perhaps, wished to be so regarded, and that later in the Hellenic world the name “Christ” became for Him a mystic sacred title of honour which ever advanced in deep religious significance. Yet can we say that Jesus Himself ever treated it as a matter of cardinal importance that men should regard Him as the Messiah? Was not His object one of quite a different character, one that entered far more into the heart of things—to call men to repentance and into the most intimate heartfelt communion with God as their Father? Did He not so absolutely lose Himself in this absorbing object that all which He said of Himself and wished men to recognise in Himself only

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served as a means to this His final aim? It is, besides, quite certain that Jesus, even if He wished to be the Messiah, did not wish to see all the attributes which Jewish doctrine applied to its Messiah transferred to Himself, not to speak of all that the enthusiastic Christian speculation of after days asserted and taught concerning Him as the Heavenly Christ, the Pre-existent, indeed the Eternal, Son of God. If Jesus expected that the Kingdom of God and the End of the World would appear in the immediate future, could He possibly have wished to found a Church with permanent ordinances and dogmas, officials and rites? If He gave up His life for His God and the good of His disciples, could His heart have been set upon establishing a dogma concerning the significance of His Death, and upon making the benefit of His self-sacrifice dependent upon the acceptance of that dogma? Was it His intention to connect intimate communion between God the Heavenly Father and His children with a participation in mystic sacraments, and thus both to assure and to limit the immediate presence of the Omnipresent; or did He wish to clothe in the form of a special mystery something that was wonderful and sacred indeed, and yet accessible even to a little child? Did not Jesus live as a genuine man among men, limited by the conditions of earthly existence and of contemporary thought; did He not aim at working simply by the influence

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## THE PROBLEM

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of a heart full of love and serene undaunted faith, is it not thus that He did what He did, and are not His true disciples those who understand this language of the heart of their Master and translate it into action? Who is it, then, that has really obscured this simple Gospel of Jesus; who is it that has confined us within the outward organisation of a Church where men would order the attitude of our inmost hearts towards our God? Who is it that has made another God of Him Who would bring us to God, and has set Him between God and ourselves? Who has taught us to carry our speculation into Heaven itself, to make assertions concerning Christ in the world beyond and His relation to the Father? Who has taught Christians to dispute concerning the significance of a feast of love wherein Jesus once, at a time of sacred inspiration, aimed at creating a bond of loving fellowship between Himself and His own? Is it indeed only in the waters of Baptism that we can rise to a new life in purity of heart? In short, who is it that is responsible for that tremendous, momentous, and distorting transformation whereby a religion in its essence so purely of the heart and so entirely spiritual as to express a relationship between God and man that is ultimate and absolute, raised far above the sphere of change and accident—whereby a religion really true and unique in its truth has now again taken to itself a form and accoutrements like any other

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religion, so that Christianity has again become only one religion among many? Again, we have all the misery of religious disputings, the strife with other religions, the strife within the fold itself, anathema and excommunication, persecution and religious rancour just as before—only now in the name of Him Who was Love!

In days gone by the Reformers, when they wished to free themselves and Christendom from all the pitiable perversions of human invention in religion, went back to the beginnings of Christianity; they believed that in the words of the New Testament pure genuine religion was to be found, that in them they heard God Himself speaking to men. Especially in the words of the Apostle St. Paul, who contended so mightily against Jewish ecclesiasticism and legalism, they felt that they had discovered the charter of the royal liberty of the Christian man. To-day we see more and more clearly not only that the Reformers then took over much of the legalistic element of Catholicism which continued to exist and to develop in the reformed churches, but that in the very New Testament itself are to be found the beginnings of a doctrinal and ecclesiastical development which drape and veil the historical form of Jesus and the true import of His teaching, though it is true that we can still discern them clearly enough. And it also becomes ever more obvious that it was the very Apostle of Christian



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## THE PROBLEM

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freedom, *St. Paul himself*, who was the first great champion of a Christology and an ecclesiastical organisation from which the Catholic Christendom of later times has logically developed. *Was not, then, St. Paul the real founder of Christianity?*

If this be so, then the more this Apostle advances in historical significance the more fatal must his influence appear to us. Already many are pointing the finger at him and are crying : This is the man who has turned the whole world upside down ; he has given us a new god, one who is not the true God ; he it is who would have us assent instead of trustfully believe, who has taught that a faith of assent in his Christ and His work of propitiation alone justifies a man before God, and is of more worth than all righteous action ; he it is who has made his own sudden conversion and his own impetuous enthusiastic devotion to Christ a law for us all, who would have us men, living in the world, crucify ourselves to the world, and so would make us useless to the world. And what now if Pauline Christianity is Christianity, what if behind it we can scarcely any longer discern the form of Jesus, what if there lies in the background a form whose Jewish Messianic traits are even more strange and out of harmony with our ideals ? Ought we not then to break altogether with these imaginings of an alien world, of a past that we have left far behind, and ought we not in unfettered freedom to seek the way to God for our

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generation? There are others who know right well that we all live from the past, who also reflect that it is not for nothing that Christianity has overcome the world, not for nothing that St. Paul has pointed to the form of Jesus of Nazareth; and just as the Reformation appealed from the recognised ecclesiastical dogmas of its times to St. Paul and the New Testament, so they would now go behind St. Paul and the writings that have been influenced by him to Jesus Himself; thus they cry: *Back from Paul to Jesus!* To them the Lord Jesus, His Faith, and His Love are the genuine kernel of that Christianity which alone has given strength and victory to the Christianity of the Church: and thus for them Jesus is still the true Founder of Christianity. And for this very reason they think that they can the more easily dispense with St. Paul as a developing, organising, and at the same time perverting influence in Primitive Christianity.

And yet we cannot wonder that the Church, whose very character has been determined by St. Paul, should raise a most emphatic protest against such a view of things. *The Heavenly Christ of St. Paul is indeed the Lord of the Church, her most sacred mystery and her most precious treasure; in the sign of His Cross she has conquered and hopes still to conquer; St. Paul's doctrine of Justification is for the Protestant Church the article upon which she stands and*

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## THE PROBLEM

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with which she believes she must fall. And is it not in truth a Gospel of wondrous depth and yet of wondrous simplicity : God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life ? This is a classical summary of Pauline doctrine ; but the fourth Evangelist puts it in the mouth of our Lord, and thereby asserts that Paul and Jesus are at one in this doctrine, that St. Paul's gospel was not different from that of the disciple whom Jesus loved. Nor can any one fail to perceive what power and what blessing have emanated from faith in a gospel such as this. Joyous pride and yet shame and self-abasement must indeed fill the souls of those who can believe that the Eternal Son of God for their sakes left Heaven above and took upon Himself their weakness and their sin ; to them comes like a breath of life the good news of that wondrous divine power, whereby Christ was actually raised from the dead, and whereby assurance was given that His act of loving self-sacrifice was accepted ; and what blessed comfort and encouragement in the realisation that this Human Friend of friends still lives and is near to every soul that seeks after Him !

But this very form of a Son of God side by side with the all-pervading, all-directing God and Father, this descent from a heavenly world into our small planet, this antique conception of a

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propitiatory sacrifice, this miracle of a corporal Resurrection and Ascension, this mystic communion with a Person in the life beyond—all this is foreign to the modern mind. Though the world of faith which is bound up with these ideas seems ever so friendly and full of comfort, though its long and sacred past may well claim our reverence, yet we can no longer feel at home in it. And so it has come to pass that the theme: *Jesus or Paul?* occupies the earnest attention of men's minds, that it stirs the debate of the theologian as well as the heart of the layman. Here an old faith is grappling with one that is new, one that is now seeking for its exact formula. *On either side the motives at work are really religious*, on either side arguments are advanced—weapons of offence and defence—that have a good basis in history. What is to be the issue of the conflict? Can a purely historical investigation have the deciding voice in a controversy where so many questions of the heart, of feeling and of belief, must have their say?

Yet the arrival at a mutual understanding must surely be possible, must in any case be attempted. Real facts of history can in some way or another be established, at least with a certain degree of probability, however we may afterwards interpret them. The first thing, therefore, must be to try by purely historical investigation to ascertain what our Lord and what St. Paul really performed,

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## THE PROBLEM

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and in what relation they stand to one another ! It matters not whether the enquirer finds such a man as St. Paul sympathetic or unsympathetic, whether he is disposed or indisposed to accept the Apostle's testimony—*his first concern is simply with a problem of the highest importance in the history of religion*—namely, the fact that the history of Christianity actually begins with two characters of such marked personality. Nor need the friends of St. Paul and his gospel fear any detriment to the Apostle from such an investigation as if it would imply depreciation of his peculiar position and importance—indeed, from the very first it will be clear to every one that the mighty personality of him who first introduced Christianity into the great world will ever continue to exert its influence in the history of Christianity, and that thus in the symphony of the movement which originated with Jesus another string, that which was once sounded by St. Paul, will ever vibrate with its distinctive note. This is surely the best and shortest road to the understanding of the complicated history of Christianity.

And the more clearly the forms of our Lord and His Apostle stand before us, the more distinctly we recognise the points wherein they differ from one another and the spiritual basis of this difference, the more assured will be the attitude which we shall be able to adopt both towards them and their teaching. Here, of course,

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the difference in the attitude adopted by people of the present day depends upon the very different requirements of religious feeling and the customary intellectual outlook : whether, on the one hand, together with religious feeling there is combined a strong craving for a conception of the Universe and of life that is in harmony with natural philosophy—or whether, on the other hand, where religion is in question a man prefers to turn his back upon philosophy and science and simply to accept in faith what is enjoined by the Church. Yet we have good confidence that at heart we are all concerned about one and the same thing—communion with the Eternal God, the source and basis of our life and being, with the God Who is Love. As we then ask : Who was the Founder of our religion ? we are at once led on to the more definite question : Who is it that has led us into direct communion with God ? And though there can be only one answer to this question—Jesus !—it will nevertheless clearly appear how very important the ministry of St. Paul was to the cause of Jesus, and in particular how we owe it to him that the cause of Jesus could also become our cause.

## ST. PAUL

IN historical investigations such as these which we are about to undertake, we must from the very first only count upon results that are approximately certain and clear. This is owing to the distance at which we stand both in temperament and in time from the phenomena under consideration, and to their subjective character, no less than to the nature of the original records, which, where they are not merely incidental letters, are either the productions of an enthusiastic faith or of the vigilant care of a pastor of souls. We may not, however, use this difficulty to support the view that because we cannot here attain to historical certainty, faith may therefore be justifiably allowed to have a decisive voice in settling questions of historic fact. Though we are often compelled to be satisfied with mere probability in place of certainty, and often even to acknowledge our total want of knowledge, still, all that is genuinely significant beyond the dream of forgery, all that seizes upon and quickens the imagination, all that is permanent and really important, stands out only the more clearly.

In order, however, that in the investigation of

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actual historical fact our progress may be as sure as possible, I propose to start not with Jesus but with St. Paul, seeing that in his case we can always deal with his own utterances, while in the case of our Lord we can only arrive at our goal by methods of inference and deduction. Adopting this order of investigation we also make it clear from the very beginning that in the Christ of the first three gospels we are dealing not with the historical Jesus, but with the conception formed of Him by the faith and in the tradition of the Primitive Community, a conception which must have been influenced by St. Paul, seeing that it was created after his times. Moreover, if we at first treat St. Paul simply by himself there will be the less chance of our being affected by prepossession and prejudice as we in the first place attempt to appreciate the theology of St. Paul apart from the teaching of our Lord, interpreting it wherever possible in the light of his own temperament, his own spiritual and mental constitution. Such an attempt is indeed suggested to us at the very outset by the fact that the Apostle never came into personal touch with the historical Jesus.

### THE SOURCES

Here also there is, of course, the difficulty that we have not sufficient knowledge of the Apostle, seeing that no man can reveal his whole mind, still less the whole progress of the inner



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## ST. PAUL

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life of his soul, in a few occasional writings, be they ever so full of detail. The book of the Acts of the Apostles of itself shows us how much richer was the life of St. Paul than we might conjecture from his epistles. On the other hand, we learn from remarks in the epistles that the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, whose trustworthiness is gaining more and more recognition in these days, either cannot, or will not, give us any information at all on many points, while on other points, especially that of the attitude of St. Paul towards the Law and the Primitive Community, he is either consciously or unconsciously influenced by the tendency characteristic of later days to smooth away awkward situations. Again, we may well believe that St. Paul in actual life was more yielding in his attitude towards Jewish-Christian observance of the Law than he would himself allow when face to face with an opponent, that he was, perhaps unconsciously, more strongly influenced by the Primitive Community than he himself believed, and that he probably knew considerably more about the life and sayings of our Lord than appears from his epistles. And yet in dealing with St. Paul we are in a far more fortunate situation than in the case of any other notable Christian of the primitive days. Indeed, there are few characters in the whole history of antiquity which stand out before us so clearly in their personality and disclose themselves to us so

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intimately as that of St. Paul—of course, few of them were so unique in personality, so deeply spiritual, and so openly candid as he. His ingrained tendency to consider every point of controversy, every detail of discipline or of debate from the highest point of view, the lively interest with which he throws himself into everything that he touches upon, give to his casual letters now a profundity of thought, now an intimacy of self-revelation, that ever make them precious witnesses to his heart and soul, to his thought and belief. His tendency to continual digression, his love of analogy, cause him incidentally to throw light into almost every corner of his system of thought and imagination, so that we have the impression that a complete survey of this system is opened up to us. This holds good at least for the climax of his ministry and the close of his life, while for the opening period of his career as a Christian and an Apostle, and especially for his conversion and his previous career as a Pharisee, we are left to depend upon inferences and deductions, upon a few, and those of course very important, statements of the Apostle himself, and upon the record of the Acts. Since his conversion his whole thought and activity were so absolutely directed towards his great aim that we may well say that the whole Paul, in what he willed, in what he was, still lives before our very eyes.

We must presuppose the genuineness of the

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## ST. PAUL

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epistles as a whole, and we are justified in this assumption. Here, in Switzerland, we are indeed compelled to refer to the voice of continual protest which comes from Berne against such an assumption, in spite of the "semblance of originality which has been artificially impressed upon the epistles." A semblance of originality can, however, only be produced by one who is himself an original personality. In such an one we should therefore have to recognise the creator of Paulinism, and the problem would thus only be advanced about a century forwards, and time would only be gained for the development of the opposition between a free Gentile-Christianity and a narrow Judaistic Legalism. The sources of Paulinism, as well as the fact that this system of thought is independent of Jesus of Nazareth, remain the same. This independence would only be rendered more intelligible, but that mighty chasm which runs like a geological fault through the whole Pauline system of religion and morality would be left unexplained, so also the constant irritation with which the author of the Pauline epistles regards the attitude of the Primitive Community which was historically so intelligible.

The genuineness of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and of the Pastoral Epistles (to Timothy and Titus) has been disputed with such good reason that, in spite of the efforts of fervent champions,

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## JESUS OR PAUL?

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it can scarcely be upheld any longer. Here we find disciples of St. Paul already at work on the lines of the accentuation of ecclesiastical dogma, discipline, and law. For us, however, this question of genuineness is of slight importance. What the disciple here develops already had its beginnings in St. Paul. If Christ is here on the way to Divinity, we can observe the same thing in the Epistle to the Colossians, an epistle which on the whole bears the genuine stamp of St. Paul, and we can, moreover, see how such a development came about. If the contemporary friends of mystic science, the "gnostics," taught men to see and to worship angelic powers, and were prepared to accept Christ into the number of these powers, then it necessarily followed that to a true worshipper of Christ, like St. Paul, the surpassing significance of his Christ would appear in a new light. In the face of this weird company of inferior elemental deities his faith in the all-embracing significance of his Christ stood firm. In his own consciousness and in his controversial teaching Christ could not but appear as the first principle of the Universe, as the Mediator of the supernatural world, while hitherto His significance to St. Paul had been almost entirely confined to His office of mediation between Jews and Gentiles. It is true that St. Paul's Christ could never have received this developed significance unless the Apostle's conception of the

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## ST. PAUL

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heavenly Redeemer had been fashioned on such lines from the very first, and we shall see that already at an earlier period, perhaps even before his conversion to Christianity, a character of this range of significance hovered within the mental horizon of St. Paul. Accordingly, the objections to the genuineness of the Epistle to the Colossians which are deduced from the author's exalted conception of the Christ—and these it is that have hitherto for the most part determined the critics' verdict—fall asunder as soon as we become acquainted with the origin of the Pauline Christ, and are compelled to admit that such exalted characteristics were from the beginning immanent in the ideal figure of the Christ as it stood before the eyes of the Apostle.

Such a development of the conception of the Christ could take place in the mind of St. Paul without his being clearly conscious of it. Neither need we imagine that he was conscious of the ultimate source of this conception, or of the various elements out of which it was composed, or that he knew which of these were heathen, which Jewish, which Christian in character. Again, under the overpowering influence of the revelation vouchsafed to him he may well have undervalued his connection with the Primitive Community, while on the other hand, when he was concerned with what made for unity, he may have exaggerated his agreement with this Com-

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munity in their conception of the Christ. Least of all could he have had clear comprehension of the psychological phenomenon of his conversion, of what it presupposed, of the details of its course, and of its physical and mental conditions. Accordingly, if we would attain to clear knowledge on these points, we ought not to ask questions of the enthusiast himself, but we must bring into comparison other instances of vision and conversion of a similar kind. St. Paul's own utterances concerning his conversion come under our consideration rather as indications, indeed "symptoms," of his psychological condition than as a scientific description of the course of the phenomenon itself.

### THE GOSPEL OF ST. PAUL

Of course, St. Paul knew, as a matter of direct intimate experience, what had been the deciding influence in his conversion, what he was before and what he became afterwards, and what message he had now to proclaim. Formerly his motto was: The Law gives Life; now: Only the Cross of Christ. But he could scarcely have realised how many peculiar psychological conditions and presuppositions were present in himself, and were to be presupposed or called into existence in others before they could comprehend this Gospel of the Cross in the sense that

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## ST. PAUL

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he understood it. Thus it is that a Peter, a James, then the Church, both in primitive days and when it had split up into its two divisions of East and West, never quite understood what he meant. Even the Reformers in their doctrine of Justification had other interests than those which St. Paul followed in his preaching of the Cross, though it is true that in the one case Jewish, and in the other case Roman Legalism had created similar conditions and similar spiritual cravings. And when in modern days there came a complete breach with the ancient system of thought, and a new system dominated by the conception of natural law and development had won its way to victory, when the artificial fabric of Heaven, Earth, and Hell had fallen in ruins and the mind had gained free outlook into infinite space, when the world had become despiritualised and had lost the glamour of ancient enchantment, then, indeed, all possibility of immediate appreciation of the Pauline Gospel vanished even for those who imagined that they still understood it and firmly believed in it. But in compensation a new possibility opened up; now, by the method of scientific history, men could learn to appreciate the origin and the real meaning of Paulinism, and, in particular, could compare it with the teaching of our Lord.

“The Pauline Gospel is the Gospel of the Cross.” How simple it sounds! and yet how

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much we must take into consideration before we can really comprehend its significance! The simple theology of the Primitive Community took note, indeed, of the Cross of Christ, but set itself to interpret it only in the light of the Resurrection. It was by the Resurrection that the followers of Jesus were confirmed in their faith that the Crucified was nevertheless the Heaven-sent Messiah, that His promises stood sure and that His commands had eternal validity, that His death was the death of One innocent and holy, and therefore must have a special meaning, a mysterious significance, for all Israel. The death of Jesus attained for them the significance of a propitiatory sacrifice such as that which, according to Isaiah, the suffering Servant of God was to offer on behalf of His people. With St. Paul this propitiatory aspect is set in the foreground—indeed, forms the central point of his message. A point of view which for the Primitive Community was perhaps an expedient to overcome the "Offence of the Cross," was for him the very heart of his teaching. Hence we find him continually dwelling upon it and ever regarding it in a fresh light: The blood of the Son of God has propitiatory power; His deliverance to death is an act of love on the part of the Father, an act of obedience on the part of the Son; the Law has received its just satisfaction; the curse is fulfilled; sin is condemned and slain in the flesh of Christ; if one



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died, then are all dead ; the baptized are buried with Christ in His death.

How many connections on all sides are here opened up with a world to which a Paul had easy access, while for us it is a far distant land ! And, again, that Heaven whither the Son of God enters arrayed in His body of heavenly light, concerning which St. Paul can tell us so much ; that Heaven where in the beginning Christ was with God in the form of God, the Divine agent in Creation—what an unknown land it is to us ! That descent from Heaven, that putting off one form of existence and putting on the human form of a servant, that assumption of a flesh which was in the likeness of sinful flesh and yet encompasses One Who is sinless—how strange it all seems, how far removed from our way of thinking ! Before we can understand these things we must bring ourselves into sympathy, in thought and feeling, with St. Paul's intellectual attitude towards this world of ours, our humanity, our flesh, our origin and nature, the condition from which the Cross of Christ is meant to redeem us. Through all St. Paul's statements concerning such things there runs a fundamental strain with which we in these days must learn to sympathise if we would understand his feeling concerning redemption. This universe in which he lives, from the heavenly powers which rule over it to the flesh in which he (Paul) is imprisoned, is absolutely and eternally

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alien from and hostile to God: it is a great charnel-house wherein Death reigns as king, where God Himself cannot and, indeed, will not give any help; where all morality is sin, all religion is idolatry, all growth is corruption. Of a Hell, St. Paul says nothing; this world is Hell enough for him.

But over against this there stands that new, wondrous state wherein St. Paul, while still in the outward body of corruption and still oppressed by its bonds, feels himself born again to a new creation, dead to the world of the flesh, one with Christ Who reigns in him as a new other self. Between these two worlds, to both of which he still belongs, there is no sort of fellowship; the Cross stands between them; the one is, as it were, non-existent for the other; only by a death, by a crucifixion, can man pass from one to the other.

Simple faith cannot lead us, still less can a philosophic or dogmatic system teach us, to move in such worlds and to find our way among such antitheses as these. But St. Paul also presents us with problems of inward experience. Above all, there is his conversion and inward illumination; again, his trances of spiritual ecstasy. Then he tells us of outward and inward victories and defeats; he presents us with strange spiritual interpretations of Old Testament prophecies, with views and traditions which he shared with the Christian communities of his day. Unconsciously

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he is under the sway of the religious views and principles of contemporary Jewish and heathen mysticism—all that he and his contemporaries summed up under the term “Gnosis.” What we find in St. Paul is as really a Gnostic system, a creation of thought and imagination, as the creations of Valentinian and Basilides in the sphere of heretical Gnosis or of Origen in the Church. And the more clearly we realise that our Lord was no Gnostic, the more do we advance in our appreciation of the vastness of the gulf which here yawns between Him and these strange speculations of St. Paul.

But just as the systems of the Gnostics which we have mentioned are distinguished by their spiritual import and their moral earnestness from many feeble, fantastic, and even immoral productions of those times of seething thought and feeling, so also St. Paul stands out as an unique figure when contrasted with all other representatives of religious Gnosis. To him the later ecclesiastical Gnosis of a Clement and an Origen owes its best; indeed, the whole system of Catholic Theology and Dogma is dependent upon St. Paul. Yet it cannot be denied that even St. Paul shares in the questionable characteristics of all Gnosticism; in that predominance of the fantastic, that speculation which is the slave of feeling and fancy; that tendency to one-sided generalising construction and interpretation; that interweaving of

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absolutely incongruous elements : that absorbing interest in cabalistic theory and in myth instead of in historical fact. It is true, indeed, that in all love and moral earnestness he set his Christ in opposition to all the other powers of Gnosticism : yet still his Heavenly Christ is, in spite of and indeed because of His alien garment of earth, a genuinely Gnostic creation wherewith the historical form of Jesus of Nazareth is shrouded.

### THE PECULIAR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE THEOLOGY OF ST. PAUL

It is impossible that St. Paul could have expounded the deep mysteries of his Gnosis and have made them intelligible to newly converted Gentiles, who were for the most part simple folk and with whom it must have been often necessary to begin by implanting the most elementary moral principles. Even the Gospel of the Cross—indeed, this very Gospel, which was an offence to all wisdom and pride of knowledge—could only have been delivered by St. Paul for the most part in its very simplest form : “ He died for our sins according to the Scriptures ” ; just as it was preached in the Primitive Community—nor, indeed, did he even wish to preach a different Gospel from theirs. Then, as now, the attractive power of the message of the Cross ultimately depended upon the overpowering im-

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pression which Love, joyful in self-sacrifice, makes upon every receptive heart. But now we see that St. Paul's Gospel of the Cross, even in its simplest form, still presents elements, or depends upon elements, of quite a different character belonging to the sphere of Gnostic mysticism and mythology. Again—a fact of far wider significance—St. Paul aimed at bringing every one to whom he preached the Cross into real experience of the spiritual crisis which he had himself passed through ; he would bring them into actual experimental communion with the Death and Resurrection of the Son of God, with the death to this world and the rising again into the mystic heavenly spiritual life. His hearers must enter with him into all those relationships which for him were bound up with the Cross ; but such an entrance does not at all necessarily imply that the hearer knows and realises all these relationships ; all is directly brought about by simple faith and baptism. Therefore, in his epistles to the churches, St. Paul, from the fact that his readers had become Christians, can draw conclusions in the sphere of thought, of feeling, and of action which simple neophytes could scarcely have dreamed of when they came to Baptism. This forceful method, wherein the Apostle assumes that all share in his own way of thinking, was indeed possible in his days, when he and most of his hearers lived in a similar environment of thought and feeling. This

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demand of a similar temperament and a similar spiritual experience answers, indeed, to the energy and simple directness of a personality such as knew no peer and found no match in all the world around ; and yet, even in the Apostle's own time, this demand was only possible within the circle that was dominated by his direct influence, and then only during his lifetime ; in after days men wished, indeed, to follow him, but it was now beyond their power.

It is therefore not so easy a matter for succeeding generations to hold fast to the heritage of St. Paul. Least of all can we do this by picking out certain of his tenets that are acceptable to ourselves and ignoring the difference in the whole mental standpoint and in personal characteristics.

It is most natural that Protestantism should regard the doctrine of Justification as the essence of Paulinism, and should desire to uphold it as in substance the religion of the New Testament. But the very fact that St. Paul expounds this doctrine in detail only in one passage of the Epistle to the Romans, and then only in controversy with devotees of the Law, is opposed to this point of view. In this passage he follows in the steps of his Jewish adversaries ; his whole conception of the Divine Judge, who reckons Righteousness apart even from works, is Jewish. Even with the Rabbis works only make a man righteous if God reckons them for righteousness ; even with the

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Rabbis faith in the Law and its promises is reckoned for righteousness. St. Paul now says to them : " I, as well as you, proclaim a righteousness, but not a righteousness proceeding from works or from the acceptance of the Law, but from faith in the propitiatory act of Christ." We see how he translates his thoughts into the language of his opponents in order to come to close quarters with them. When Luther stood before similar opponents, he could speak in like fashion. Yet the real essence of Paulinism is not to be sought here, but there where St. Paul describes his death with Christ and his resurrection together with Him. Still, at the root of even this doctrine there lies the conception of the propitiatory force of blood that is shed, a conception which belonged to the actual belief of the whole of antiquity, while for us it is like a garment which we have put on at the bidding of our religious teachers, and has no points of contact with the rest of our world of feeling ; and when we are further told that it is a God-man Who here sheds His blood—again a conception in accord with ancient modes of thought—we are only brought face to face with new difficulties, seeing that for us the question is one of ethics, of responsible personalities, whose guilt and whose punishment can by no means be transferred to another or be removed by the shedding of blood that is not their own.

It is as useless to interpret St. Paul in terms of

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our Lord. For he himself never refers to our Lord's teaching concerning Himself and His ministry, nor does he desire to be instructed by the original apostles.

Not until we have arrived at a clear understanding of the peculiar character of the historical Paul, with all those traits so alien to our minds, can we come under the spiritual influence of his personality. It is only then that he, with all his genuinely religious power, will be able to work upon our souls: it is only then that we shall be able to give a new independent expression to the impression which he makes upon us. If we should then be disposed to admit his conceptions and doctrinal statements to some sort of new life among us, we shall do this in the clear consciousness that very much that sounds the same has for us a different significance. Then only shall we also be able to answer the question: What are the points wherein Paulinism really coincides with, or comes into contact with, our religious feeling; where is it that we feel ourselves dependent upon St. Paul; where is it that we would advance on his lines; where is it that we must leave him? Not until we have arrived at a just appreciation of St. Paul can we compare him with our Lord. Hence there is thrust upon us the task of making ourselves once for all acquainted with the system of St. Paul, the singularity and Gnostic character of which we have already ascertained.



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### THE THEOLOGICAL SYSTEM OF ST. PAUL

From the fact that the whole Christology of St. Paul culminates in the Cross, we can see how intimately the Gospel of the Cross is bound up with the whole theological system of the Apostle. The whole course of Divine Providence is directed towards leaving no other possible way of escape than faith in the Cross—the whole creation, the relations, the activity, and the destiny of the Angelic World are regarded from this standpoint, indeed, even the nature of God is thereby determined. The Cross, which for Jesus in Gethsemane was certainly a subject of agonised questionings, forms therefore one of the principal distinguishing features between the message of our Lord and that of St. Paul; still more is this so with the relationship into which St. Paul brings the Cross.

God, according to St. Paul, stands in no direct relationship to the World. He created the World by His Son. Moreover, between the World and God comes the dominion of the Angelic powers, the Archons or Elemental Forces, which govern seasons and years; there are Angels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers whose object is to separate man from God. Indeed, the god of this world is Satan himself, who ever hinders the cause of the true God, and by his angels afflicts God's people. We do not learn

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how long this power over the world has been in his hands ; at all events he did not first gain access to and influence over the world through the Fall of man ; Satan could rob Eve of her purity before Adam approached her. Since, however, Sin came into the world, Sin and Death rule over the world as personal powers.

The world being thus separated from God by a cloud of questionable, indeed hostile, powers, is, because of this separation, subject to corruption, and travails in pain, yearning for a redemption. All this is in accordance with the Will of God, and is appointed for the good of man, upon whom the whole process of the Universe really hinges.

Through the sin of the first man death has come into the world, and sin involved his own guilt and the guilt of his descendants. Yet, on the other hand, the first man, like all of his descendants, was already in the flesh—and in the flesh dwells no good thing, it is flesh of sin—moreover, all flesh, like everything that is seen, is subject to corruption. Behind this interweaving of human guilt and absolute necessity there however stands—and this is the decisive point—the Divine decree : The Scripture hath shut up all under sin, and therefore under wrath and death.

Neither did the Law check the development of this Divine plan, rather—according to the bold and astounding statement of St. Paul—it was given simply in order to draw sin out and to make

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it exceeding sinful. Besides, it was given by the Angels—this means for St. Paul that it contributed to deepen the clouds which lay between God and man. It is also quite clear that St. Paul brings the Law into connection with his conception of natural law as a law of fatal necessity administered by the powers of the spheres and of the heavenly bodies, so that the service of the Law was for him a form of the worship of the heavenly bodies.

Nevertheless, the Law is really the expression of the Will of God, and would give life to those who can keep it, but this is impossible because of the flesh. Hence the condemnation of the Law, its curse, has legal validity and accomplishes itself as an inevitable decree of destiny among both Jews and Gentiles, though the latter do not possess the written Law. All are under the discipline of the taskmasters, who conduct those subject to them to the point where they are forced to despair of themselves and of every power between heaven and earth. Sin round about them, the curse overshadowing them, Death before them—bodily and eternal death are one for St. Paul—their flesh a prison-house—nay, already as it were, a corpse—which holds the soul in bondage; and within, the inward man, a mind which delights in God and in His Will, which yearns for life, for life eternal, for redemption, and yet cannot escape from its prison, from the

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sentence of condemnation. The end of all—a Judgment wherein all the wrath hitherto accumulated will discharge itself, wrath which will only be the more intense because of the long-suffering of God in the past.

But now God, when His time had come, had sent forth His Son, as He had determined and had promised in the ages past. This Son is not God—for a Jew there was but One God, with no plurality in His nature; all determination, all distinction, all activity in the Divine nature were for him properties or activities of the One God, His Revelation or an emanation of His Essence. In later times these manifestations of God were raised to the rank of independent entities: yet they were not regarded as independent gods, but only as associated with and subordinate to the Divinity. The Son, however, is the image of the Father, begotten as a Son before all creation in the likeness of the Father: He carries in Himself all the fulness of the Father's essence. By Him the world was created; He it is Who is the inmost upholding principle of the Universe. With spiritual blessing and under a veil, and yet often in visible form, He was present with the nation chosen to receive the Divine Revelation—thus He was the Rock from which Israel drank in the Wilderness, and as such He accompanied the nation in its wanderings. At last, however, the Father sent Him down to the earth for the final redemption of

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mankind and of the whole world. This redemption He was to accomplish by His death ; this death was the aim of His Incarnation.

Let us now summarise St. Paul's views concerning the consummation and the significance of this death.

He Who before bore in His own person the glorious form of God laid aside all the riches of His glory and took upon Himself the form of man. Whether long before this He was the Heavenly Man—as He was afterwards according to St. Paul's description—is a point which may be neglected ; at all events, He stood in relationship with humanity and over humanity as its Head, as the Head, indeed, of each individual man, and when He came into the world for the salvation of mankind, He became a second Adam, the first principle and the head of a new humanity. In every relation He conducts Himself as the antithesis of the first Adam. The latter sought by robbery to be equal with God, to be as God, and so lost the Divine glory wherewith the first man was originally clothed. Christ held it not as a thing to be grasped at to be equal with God, and laid aside His glory. He, the Son, became a servant, that Servant of God Whom the Prophets had promised and portraited, the "Poor and Humble One" of the Psalms. As servant, as "the Lowly One," He humbled Himself to the obedience of a servant, in subjection to the Will of God. By this Will it

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was specially appointed that He should be born of a woman, that is, according to St. Paul's meaning, in weakness. Accordingly, just like others born of women, He came under the authority of the World-powers and of the Law, so that He might help those whose bondage He shared. Above all it was necessary for Him to take upon Himself flesh in the likeness of the flesh of sin. The consequence was that He, like all flesh, and like all that was infected with sin, must die. In Him also the Law and the curse of the Law were accomplished. As the Son of God and as the obedient Servant He naturally knew no sin; sin did not force its way from the flesh into His Will—nevertheless, the sentence of condemnation was fulfilled upon Him, because of sin in the flesh.

Thus because He had become partaker in the guilt of the flesh and of mankind, He died upon the Cross, though He was, in fact, innocent. The death of the Cross was the very death which it was necessary, which it was appointed, for Him to die; for the Law, by whose sentence the flesh lay under the curse, had said: Cursed is he that hangeth on the tree. Thus together with mankind and on behalf of mankind Christ became a curse. Therewith the power of the beings that had hitherto tyrannised over mankind was broken. Sin which was, as it were, concentrated in the flesh of Christ now in and with that flesh had suffered execution; the claim of the Law had

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been satisfied, the curse, whose threatening cloud overshadowed all mankind, was fulfilled. But not only has the dominion of Death come to an end, Christ is Risen indeed, He now has the dominion, and with Him a new principle, a new order of life, rules among men. For though the Angelic powers in their ignorance could slay the Lord of Glory, though Death could snatch Him away into the under-world, yet they could not destroy Him. After the appointed space of time, within that significant period of three days, God by His life-giving Spirit raised Him from the dead. Christ indeed still remained man—He is now the Heavenly Man—but He left His flesh behind Him, and instead has put on a glorious body of heavenly light. He is now pure Spirit, His body is also a spiritual body—Sin, Law, Death have now no longer any dominion over Him; yet as spiritual power He can exercise authority in their sphere among men who still stand under their power.

For all this happened on behalf of men who had been brought by the Flesh, by Sin, and Death into such a state of helplessness in order that they might have no other way of escape than by cleaving to the death and victory of the Son of God Who had been sent to them. For whosoever trusted himself to Him, whosoever united himself with Him in confident faith, was saved. Christ joined Himself to him in a bond of unity; he lived in Christ, Christ in him. This union was first

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accomplished in the waters of Baptism wherein the baptized put on Christ, then again and again in the Lord's Supper where the partaker united himself with Christ as well as with the Church, His Body on Earth. The believer now shared in the experiences which Christ Himself had passed through ; he died with Christ, he rose again with Him, the propitiation wrought by Christ in regard to the Law and Sin availed for him, he was redeemed, the ransom had, as it were, been paid for him. The bonds whereby man was enslaved to sin, so that he could not but transgress again and again, were broken ; with Christ he was dead unto sin and free unto righteousness, and he was filled with the Spirit, the power, life, and love of Him Who, out of love to men, His foes, had sent His own Son into the world, that Son Who in love had become poor and had yielded Himself to death. With Christ, the believer was also delivered from the Law, and raised above the sphere of its tyranny. Not only had the Law nothing more to punish in him, but it also had no further claim upon him ; now love, without law, fulfilled the whole Law in perfect freedom. Hence the barrier between Jew and Gentile had also fallen. The way of grace opened up through Christ was free for all. The Old Testament still remained valid ; indeed, here were contained all the promises which had now been fulfilled.

One part of the fulfilment, to be sure, was still



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outstanding, that is, its outward manifestation ; now men only had the Spirit as a pledge of what was to come. But in spite of this security St. Paul groans under the weary burden of the outward body, and the whole Creation round about him groans under the burden of corruption ; still for human eyes Christ is hidden with God, and together with Him the true life and the future glory of Christians. And yet Christ already reigns on behalf of His people at God's right hand. Already by His Death He has stripped the Angelic powers of their rights, and by His Ascension into Heaven of their power, and has also brought order and obedience into the Angelic world and has reconciled it with God. The Angelic powers can no longer separate from the love of God any who are in Christ. But the fight goes on against the real enemies of God, Satan and his angels ; all these enemies will be destroyed, and the day will come when Christ will judge them in the council of His saints. The last enemy that will be destroyed is Death. At last all tongues—all tongues, not only of men but also of angels, of the dead, and of the powers of the under-world—will be forced to confess that Christ is *Lord* ; this is His reward for having become *Servant*. But in the end this "name" of Christ is only to minister to the honour of the Father ; when Christ has brought about universal recognition of the glory of God, then His task will have been fulfilled.

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When the World is purified and filled with the Spirit of Christ and of God, then there is no longer need of a mediator between God and the World. God is then All in All. Direct communion with God, and the all-pervading Reign of God form the twofold goal of the ways of God and of the hope of St. Paul.

Such was St. Paul's system of belief, so genuinely religious, so inclusive of all that is ultimate in religion. It is filled with the breath of the most fervent and enthusiastic love; it rests upon the foundation of the loving purpose of God and the loving acts of Christ. It pierces down into the depths of the profoundest need of heart and conscience; it dispenses with all that is superficial and outward, it is fully conscious of the weakness of mere morality and law. It is pervaded by a spirit of freedom and of exalted joy in what is good. It embraces the whole of mankind, indeed, in the confidence of love it presses on into the world of angels and heavenly powers. With all its feeling of weakness, its voice is one of courageous energy, indeed in weakness it sees its strength. It dares to reason with God, and yet humbly submits itself to Him. It praises and magnifies God's righteousness, it fears His wrath, and flies for refuge to His Grace. The story it relates is the story of the Universe, it recites the great drama of Heaven and Earth, it reads the secrets of the soul, and proclaims the principles of Moral Law, it

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interprets Scripture and tells of Revelation that has been personally experienced. It surveys the fortunes of mankind and of the World, the secret depths of the human heart, aye, even the deep things of God, as with the eyes of God, as in the Spirit by which God knows Himself—and yet stands in adoration before the Divine Wisdom Whose significance is past finding out. From premises which are thoroughly Jewish it overthrows the barriers and dispels the prejudices of Judaism, and yet for it the Jewish nation still abides the beginning, the middle, and the end of the history of Salvation upon earth. Here in truth ages and nations find their meeting point, and a new age with a new people now springs into existence. The Christ of St. Paul becomes the God of this new race.

Notwithstanding all this we can never forget that here, as has been already proved, we have to do with antique Gnosis and mythology; not with the thoughts of God Himself, but with thoughts of an inspired man concerning God. We hear yet again that primæval strain wherein mankind through the ages sings of the Son of God, of the Divine Hero, Who descends to earth and into the depths of the under-world, thence returning victorious to the throne of God, there to take up His power and dominion. We hear it now in its Christian form, in the characteristic transformation which it has undergone in a soul

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of peculiar religious and moral strength, and enforced by means of Rabbinical exegesis and dialectic. That this way of thinking and feeling is not the only form of Christianity is shown, above all, by the method of our Lord, to Whom we shall soon go for advice and judgment concerning the Christianity of St. Paul. First, however, what has been just said suggests the consideration of the question of the historical origin of Paulinism. Here it seems we are at first led so far from Jesus that it will be difficult to trace any longer the lines of connection with Him. And yet St. Paul professes to be a disciple of Jesus Christ! So stated, the problem will present itself to us with its difficulties sharply defined.

### THE ORIGIN OF THE THEOLOGY OF ST. PAUL

As one asks: Whence did St. Paul derive his teaching? the simplest answer would seem to be: By tradition from Jesus through the instrumentality of the original apostles. But the answer given by St. Paul himself is quite different: I received my Gospel not from men, but by a revelation of Jesus Christ. This means that all dependence upon any human tradition, even that of the primitive apostles, is denied. Accordingly we find that Saul after his conversion does not go up to Jerusalem, there to be

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instructed in the Gospel and to gain more accurate information concerning Jesus, until three years had passed, and then only in order to become acquainted with Peter, an object for which a stay of a fortnight sufficed. Think how, eighty years later, the Bishop Papias anxiously sought for words of the Lord and for any information concerning these that had been transmitted by each separate apostle. Except St. Peter and St. James, the brother of our Lord, St. Paul had not even seen one of them—and he is even proud that he can say this. Then there was another long space of fifteen years before he again betook himself to Jerusalem, and then only because he was instructed to go by revelation. Even now his object is not to learn, but to declare and to defend all that he had done on his own initiative. And yet, however firm St. Paul's purpose might be, he could not, of course, isolate himself from the influence of the Primitive Community. Already, before his conversion, he had come face to face with Christians full of enthusiastic inspiration. Thus, in spite of all, there must have been unconsciously at work an influence whose importance will form the subject of further enquiry.

For the present, however, so much is certain, that the most immediate source of Pauline doctrine is to be sought in the Apostle's own personal experience.

This would, however, seem at once to exclude

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the view which we have already set forth, and which we were now about to investigate in detail, that St. Paul has interwoven beliefs of his times—heathen, Hellenic, Oriental, or Judæo-Gnostic traditions—into the scheme of his Christian thought. Would not St. Paul have set such things on a level with that "Wisdom of this world," that knowledge of the "beggary elements of this World," against which he contends in the Epistle to the Colossians on behalf of his Christ?

But here, again, we must reflect how little clear consciousness each of us often possesses of the origin of what we are accustomed to regard as the self-evident axioms of our thought and the essential elements of our religion. If St. Paul, as we assume, grew up from his youth in an atmosphere of conceptions such as we have mentioned, he would have taken them in as instinctively as his breath, and it is impossible that he should afterwards have been conscious of the source whence he derived them.

Again, if St. Paul professes to have received everything by Divine Revelation, we seem to be excluded from tracing back his doctrine to his own reflection or from regarding it as a product of his own speculation. With justice it can be upheld that it was not Paul that created his Christ, but it was his Christ Who seized him, overpowered him, and subdued him—that He came to Paul as One Whom Paul would not accept,

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Whom he denied and persecuted ; and that here we stand before *the mystery* of religion which mocks at all explanation, which it is the very essence of religion to acknowledge and to reverence, without which earth would be a desert and heaven blackness, life would be mere hollowness, and all prospect upwards would be closed.

We shall certainly have to take into our reckoning this mysterious element in religion and also in the religion of St. Paul. We shall not measure, nor would we wish to measure by calculation, how God drew near to him in the very depths of his soul and assured him, called him, and endowed him with inexhaustible supplies of spiritual force. This, however, does not mean that we are barred from tracing the actual process of this spiritual experience, so far as we can still discern it, and from connecting its separate events with one another by a chain of cause and effect. So far from being debarred, we are compelled to do this by the very laws of our thought. That, which in its ultimate basis is a mystery beyond all finding out, nevertheless manifests itself to us in the world of phenomena in connections which we can survey and also compare with their temporal environment.

When from the unfathomable depths, whercon our whole existence is based, there rises into the heart of man mysterious inspiration, the new experience at once embodies itself in the forms of

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thought and modes of conception under which each man is compelled to think—forms and modes such as are characteristic of a definite time, and of the particular mental and, indeed, physical constitution of a particular man. Therefore, while we gladly acknowledge in St. Paul revelation in its overmastering power, we nevertheless assert that the way in which he viewed, conceived, interpreted, and in his teaching expounded this revelation was determined by his temperament, by the nature of his mind and his imagination, and was also influenced by the ideas, hopes, and feelings which formed the spiritual atmosphere of the society in which he lived and worked.

St. Paul understands under the revelation which he had received not simply a gradual illumination of his thought and feeling. For him it meant the marvellous event of a definite point of time, at which he had seen the Lord in heavenly glory. Here the references in his epistles agree with the Acts of the Apostles. Since then he knew that the Jesus, Whom the Jews had crucified, Whose adherents he was persecuting, had risen, had ascended to God, and was glorified. The overmastering power of His Spirit had been felt by St. Paul so forcibly and so profoundly—indeed, he still continued to feel it so vividly—that really it was no longer he himself that lived, but Christ lived in him. Ought we not, therefore, in the face of this personal testimony, to be content to ac-



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knowledge that it really was the Heavenly Christ Who spoke on that occasion? Ought not we, like St. Paul, to bow before Him in adoration? But the vision of St. Paul does not stand by itself; it forms a link in a long chain of similar instances of religious experience; and though these are certainly not so full of worth as this event in the inner history of a man so unique, living at a time so unique in its religious character, still they are akin in nature to that which was experienced by St. Paul. When a spiritual force which has been agitating the soul in the subconscious sphere suddenly breaks forth into the sphere of consciousness, it shakes to the very foundation the whole fabric of brain and nerves where these are naturally excitable or have been rendered excitable by fasting and asceticism.

Now, there is no doubt that St. Paul was naturally disposed to see visions; at times he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body; he felt himself caught up in ecstasy into the third heaven, where he heard unutterable words. In connection therewith he experienced convulsions of the nervous system which he interpreted as buffetings of an angel of Satan. Accordingly, when we hear that he was struck down near Damascus, that he saw the light, that he heard Christ speak, and that he then remained blind for some days, the analogy of the phenomena forces us to think of a vision wherein a spiritual process

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that had been going on far down in the depths of the soul, and had at last come to the extreme point of intensity, now discharged itself.

The intrinsic value of the event would therefore consist not in the form of its occurrence, but in the content of new spiritual forces which manifested themselves therein.

If it be objected that on this supposition St. Paul was deceived about himself in a most important point, and that a life such as his, of such tremendous labour, so fruitful in results of solid value, could not have been based on deception, we can only say that such objections disclose total ignorance of the details and of the significance of religious catastrophes of this kind. The visionary is never conscious that his brain pictures to him as outward reality something that has nothing corresponding to itself in outward existence. So far, therefore, he is under deception. No one, however, will reckon this want of acquaintance with nervous pathology against him as a fault; for his work lies not in the sphere of medicine, but of religion. And in the latter sphere there is no deception about the new life, the new motives, the new heart which have been born in him, and which now, in correspondence with their excelling power and their extraordinary character, manifest themselves to the human consciousness in a far more striking way than ordinary spiritual changes and impulses can.

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More attention seems to be due to the objection that St. Paul up to the time of his conversion was plainly quite satisfied with Judaism, indeed, was proud of all that he had done for his religion, and that it could not therefore have been possible that his own soul should have revealed to him the direct opposite—the worthlessness of the Law and the significance of the Christ, against Whom he fought, as the Saviour, the mighty giver of true life. Here, however, no account is taken of the fact that thoughts of which a man is conscious, but which he wishes to suppress, are just the thoughts which come to expression in visions. The more he casts such thoughts from him the more busy they are in the subconscious sphere—they burrow and rankle within him, and the voices which he will not hear grow only the louder because of their suppression, until the energy of opposition is all at once shut off and reacts in exactly the contrary direction.

Just in the same way St. Paul would have nothing to do with the thought that the Crucified could be the Messiah. Unconsciously, however, the irresistible attraction of this Form gained upon him. The energy of the persecution could not but lend greater significance to the persecuted; his vigorous attack, as it were, called forth the ever stronger resistance of his opponent.

The conception of the Christ as applied to Him Whom he persecuted was, indeed, long since known

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to St. Paul. Many of its traits were familiar to him before he had heard of Jesus. The Messiah of Jewish expectation must have been a figure well known to him from his very childhood; and the appearance of this Messiah must have been the object of his ardent yearning. He knew that the Messiah was to be a man of flesh and blood, of the seed of David, subject to the Law, and a minister of the Circumcision. But it is certain that such a Messiah, according to the flesh, could not have sufficed for St. Paul, even in his early days. The flesh it was under whose yoke he and all his contemporaries suffered; in the flesh abode the evil impulse, in the flesh dwelt corruption. There must needs be a Messiah Who, from above, from the heavenly world, would bring the promised life to the faithful keepers of the Law. But how could a man come from Heaven? Here came the answer of that primitive tradition concerning "the Son of Man," or more correctly concerning "the Man Who comes with the clouds of Heaven." We need not here investigate the origin of this tradition. It is manifest that all the Jewish writings that refer to this figure only attempt to interpret a mysterious form with which past tradition had been long acquainted. Even Daniel was not the first to create it; already, in Ezekiel, we find "one like unto a man" sitting upon the throne of the heavenly chariot. Here, accordingly, it is Jehovah the Thunder-god Himself

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Who appears under this form. Daniel interprets this form to signify the people of the saints ; the Book of Enoch interprets it of Enoch caught up into Heaven ; the Apocalypse of Ezra, of the Messiah—at all events, this expectation of the Heavenly Man rendered it possible to believe in a Heavenly Messiah. Official Judaism contented itself with believing that the Son of David, Who was about to be, was already, like so many other good things of the future, treasured up in Heaven under the throne of God ; but we can well understand that in special circles a more real pre-existence, a heavenly life and activity of the Messiah before time began, was both taught and received. Even now, indeed, for ages past He was active on behalf of His people ! It is clear that from thoughts such as these was derived the belief, shared in by St. Paul, that the rock in the wilderness was nothing else than the Messiah Himself. Further prospects of belief opened up to the fervent longing gaze of the Jewish mystic as he noted that the Messiah is addressed in the psalm as “ Son of God.” Then it was possible to believe that Messiah embodied the truth of all those heathen tales of the sons of the gods who had descended from heaven as champions of deliverance. So, indeed, the Babylonian Marduk, as son of the god of Heaven, commissioned by his father, had fought against the powers of Chaos and had carried off the victory and had at the same

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time become creator and director of the world. Again, the Egyptian Hermes-Phet, the personified reason of God, the *Logos*, was a son of God, bringing blessing, order, and direction into the world. Other sons of the gods had descended into the under-world to deliver those who were there dwelling in captivity. One of these, Adonis—that is, the “Lord”—died yearly, and after three days returned to life again in the upper world. Tarsus, in Cilicia, the birthplace of St. Paul, was a centre where all such gods were worshipped in public and secret rites. Here such an one as St. Paul could have appropriated conceptions and expectations, all of which could have combined together in his own mind to form his conception of the Messiah; or they may have been long previously taught and discussed in apocalyptic writings, in Rabbinic schools of a mystical tendency, so that St. Paul before he became a Christian could have been familiar with the Heavenly Messiah, the Son of God, and the Lord Whom he equated with the “Lord” of the Old Testament, as a recognised conception, and could also have been acquainted with the whole body of Judæo-Gnostic doctrine concerning the Christ. Certainly all the traits of his Christ: the Messiah in the Flesh, the Son of David, the Minister of the Law; and, on the other hand, the Heavenly Man, the second Adam in his divine glory, the Son of God Who, commissioned by the highest God, creates

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the world, Who contends against the enemies of God, Who descends into the under-world, the Divine Lord Who dies and soon rises again—all these traits are ideas which were at that time in the air, indeed, here and there, were sacred and precious to thousands. It is true that at that time these ideas appear scattered in tangled confusion, and that we never elsewhere see them so united as in St. Paul—and yet St. Paul's doctrine concerning the Christ, with the exception of the suffering on the Cross, could quite well have been cherished and even publicly taught long previously in any of the Rabbinical schools of the Dispersion. At all events, we can see no reason why any of these traits of Pauline Christology should have been first adopted by the Apostle after he had become a Christian—from whom indeed could he have received instruction in such points, seeing that he refused to learn from any Christian teacher? Still less can we think of ascribing these traits to the Apostle's own speculation after his conversion; he found his Heavenly Christ once for all on that day when he drew nigh to Damascus.

After his conversion the Apostle stands absolutely assured in his conviction of the freedom of the Gospel as opposed to the Law, and in his calling as missionary to the Gentiles. How wonderful is this assurance which stood fast from the beginning, which he preserved without waver-

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ing throughout his whole career, and which he defended so victoriously against all assaults! Only the more wonderful in the case of so zealous a devotee and champion of the Law! A gradual process of change of outlook is, as has been said, not to be thought of, but only a sudden spiritual revolution.

Clearly this revolution hangs together with the whole abrupt character of his conversion. Is there any hope that we can still arrive at a clear understanding of the psychological history of this conversion? The only help that is afforded us lies in hints that he himself gives us, in conclusions drawn from the Apostle's own frame of mind and from his own judgment of himself at a later time.

The great stumbling block in the way of St. Paul's acceptance of Jesus was the hateful thought that He had been hanged as an accursed one upon the Cross. Yet the disciples of Jesus asserted that He was crucified not for His own guilt, but for the guilt of the Nation. Such an idea could not have seemed strange to St. Paul. In fact, the belief in propitiation by means of blood dominated the whole Jewish and Gentile world. If, perchance, a king offered himself for his people, or if a king dedicated his firstborn, his only son to death, as Abraham once did, such a sacrifice was accounted as having the very highest propitiatory value. That in like manner even God Himself



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should have given up His Messiah, His Son and the very Image of His Person, to death, that God Himself should have appointed the propitiatory sacrifice which the world needed in order to be reconciled to Him—such a thought must have been almost irresistibly attractive to St. Paul. If such a thought had once laid hold upon him he would never have been able to shake himself free of it. The thought that God was capable of love so unique must have filled a heart, so capable of and sympathetic with true love, with bliss unimaginable. The vision of a new blissful life in the love of God rose before him, thrust itself upon him. And all that he heard the simple disciples of Jesus tell of the attractive power of His love, all that he had found of joyous courageous faith in these disciples themselves, seemed to prove that such love was a reality—little as he would admit it to himself while he sought his life, and thought to find it, in painfully exact fulfilment of the Law, and in stern persecution of his enemies. In later days he testified that, on the contrary, the Law brought only knowledge of sin, incitement to transgression, condemnation of the sinner under sentence of death. His satisfaction with the religion of the Law and his pride in the Law were thus only self-deception, in his inmost soul he must have ever instinctively felt the want of true life in his religion. Now in the dawn light of this message of love

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the empty void of the life under the Law must have appeared to him of abysmal depth. Yet the tremendous energy of his zeal for the Law, a zeal inherited from the fathers and inflamed by his own force of will, could for the moment conceal this abyss from himself. It was a sultry, thunderous atmosphere, heavily charged with spiritual electricity. It could not but discharge itself once for all in the lightning flash of a spiritual catastrophe. So it came to pass before Damascus. Then it was that this faith in the love of God entirely gained the mastery over St. Paul; now with all his will he lived in the love of Him Who had given Himself for him, now he knew that He Who had not spared His Only Begotten Son would in Him give him all things. Now the loving sacrifice on the Cross became the pivot of his whole life of feeling and thought. Now he came to full consciousness of the complete emptiness, the utter helplessness of the religion of the Law; now he was assured that the Law belonged to that company of sin and death from which he had now made his escape. Yet even now as a pious Jew he could not cast away the Law, it must be holy, righteous, and good—but only, as St. Paul argues with relentless logic, as a Divine expedient by which men were forced under the tyranny of sin, punishment, and despair, in order that they might seize upon grace in Christ as the only means of deliverance.

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With the fall of the Law as a means of salvation there fell also the barrier between Jew and Gentile, so far as concerned the way of Salvation ; this way was now the same for both : thankful acceptance of the sacrifice of Divine love ! Nevertheless, the assurance with which St. Paul draws this conclusion and still more the assurance wherewith he believes himself to have been called from the very first to be a missionary to the Gentiles, demands a further explanation. St. Paul, like the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah, describes himself as called from his mother's womb to bring Salvation to the Gentiles. This seems to me to imply that St. Paul from his childhood had felt in himself the impulse to make the honour of his God known even to the Gentiles, and to furnish for them a share in the Salvation of Israel. Our Lord Himself testified of the Pharisees of those days that they compassed land and sea to make proselytes. The Apocalypse of Ezra shows us how deeply the question of the ultimate fate of the Gentiles stirred the hearts of pious Israelites in those days. In fact, the question : Is not God also the God of the Gentiles ? must have burned in the heart of every Jew of the Dispersion. This question must have been an especially burning one for a Jew who, like St. Paul, had observed that the Gentiles without the Law did the works of the Law, that they had in their conscience an unwritten law, and in their

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nature a faculty by means of which they could learn to know God from His works. A glance at the high ideal of religion and morality as it was cherished in all sincerity by Platonists and Stoics, showed him how many points of departure were here given for the propagation of the worship of the One God and of a pure morality—but the Law with its demand of Circumcision, and with its multitude of external ordinances, blocked all ways of advance. Hence St. Paul's missionary impulses must have wasted themselves in useless exertion and fervent yearning, until the barrier fell, and in the love of Christ a new power gained the mastery of his heart, and of itself incited him to lay all the world at its feet. Besides, his conception of the Christ was far more nearly allied to the religious craving of Heathendom than was the limited conception of a national Messiah; his Christ was an Universal Principle, an agent of Creation, and as such was from the first much more fitted to become the agent of Universal Redemption than the Son of David, whose mission was to break the Gentiles in pieces with His iron sceptre.

Thus this sudden revelation of a new world of Love and victorious energy presupposes a long period of preparation in the soul of the Apostle. Hitherto only the Divine spark had been wanting to set in a blaze the altar that had long been piled up and prepared for the sacrifice. Now we under-

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stand how so many-sided and many-coloured a phenomenon as the Pauline theology, as it were, flashes upon us in one stroke and, to all appearance, independently of contemporary Christian doctrine.

It stands to reason that the religious thought of the Apostle did not come to a halt after his conversion, though indeed we cannot derive a connected conception of its development—even only in its main features—from the few memorials of his mental activity which have come down to us, and which do not cover every period of his ministry. Yet on special points, as for instance the question concerning the Resurrection-body, we see clearly how St. Paul revolves the problem hither and thither, and makes attempts at a solution from divers directions. Again, his treatment of a subject takes a very different form according as he aims at demonstration with all the exactness of controversial proof or at winning and persuading souls by appealing to the heart; he knew well how to give manifold variations to his tone to suit the occasion. On the other hand, this Apostle, who was so free spiritually, who specially delighted in boasting of his independence of the original Apostles, is yet strictly limited, indeed in many respects fettered, by the Christian tradition in the form in which he found it. At the outset we must not forget how dependent St. Paul, with all his independence, was upon the Primitive Community. It was

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this community that held the name of Jesus in honour even after His death, and bore witness to His Resurrection. The courageous faith of the first martyrs was for St. Paul a continuous incentive to reflection concerning Jesus and to investigation of His claims. From this community he learned the significance of the Death upon the Cross, and the appeal to the Old Testament implied in: "He died for our sins according to the Scriptures." The Christian rites of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper and the belief in their mysterious power, many another religious custom, words of the Lord concerning the significance of the Lord's Supper, concerning the indissolubility of marriage, the right of the apostles to maintenance—all these are to him of binding force; and this of itself proves that St. Paul was not the creator, nor did he profess or wish to be the creator, of Christianity, Christian doctrine, Christian custom, and the Christian Church.

Yet for all this St. Paul has no intention of bowing to the authority of a man, even were he the first Apostle or the eldest brother of Jesus, but only to the command of his Lord and Master. It is true that he professes to know nothing of Christ according to the flesh; strictly interpreted this would include even the directions given by our Lord when on earth. But here again the actual importance of the historical Jesus is victorious over all theory, and hereby also it is

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clearly shown that St. Paul in essential points stands under the influence of the Primitive Community, and therefore also is dependent upon Jesus.

In order to ascertain the measure of this dependence upon the Primitive Community, and on the other hand, the measure of the Apostle's deviation from all that his Master stood for when on earth, let us now turn to consider our Lord's teaching and His own testimony concerning Himself.

# JESUS

## THE SOURCES

**I**T is possible for us to regard the whole New Testament as an authority for the teaching of our Lord, in so far as all its books profess to reflect and do indeed reflect His spirit: indeed, it was in this belief that the Church preserved and compiled them. But we are here concerned with the problem of discovering the distinctive characteristics of our Lord's teaching in contrast with any later development. That such development took place especially in the sphere of Christology is shown by these books themselves as well as by the whole history of Christian Dogma. Here the determining factor was above all the Christological doctrine of St. Paul. At once we again meet with the difficulty which has been often mentioned in connection with the investigation of our Lord's teaching: Seeing that all the books of the New Testament, in so far as they were not written by St. Paul himself, probably date from the post-Pauline period, it is difficult to work backwards from them through St. Paul to a correct appreciation of our Lord's teaching.

This is so even with the gospels. The Gospel of



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St. John professes indeed to have been written by an intimate disciple of our Lord Himself. But the possibility that this is merely a literary fiction must be admitted. All the information that the Church believed that it possessed concerning the origin of the Fourth Gospel is quite clearly only deduced from statements in the gospel itself. The uncertainty concerning the history of the disciple whom Jesus loved, the late attestation of the gospel, the serious difference of its account from that given in the other gospels, the impossibility of assigning its controversial discourses to the time of Jesus, and of interpreting them in relation to the actual problem of His ministry, the exaggeration of the miraculous—all these considerations ever abide as weighty arguments against the Johannine authorship of the gospel. Even those who believe that the Johannine authorship can be maintained, yet allow the evangelist an extensive freedom in the composition of the discourses, and in the description of events, so that one can never know where it is Jesus, where it is the evangelist that speaks. The very fact of the addition of the preface, which evidently stands as the programme of the whole gospel, shows how large a share must be assigned to the evangelist himself in the statements of the gospel concerning Christ. From this preface we learn to understand the gospel as an apology for an exalted conception of Christ in opposition to the

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Judaism of the second century. It gives us reliable information only concerning the way in which the Church of those days conducted its controversy with Judaism, not concerning our Lord's original teaching.

The three older gospels are also of a date subsequent to St. Paul, and were written with a view to Christian apologetics and Christian edification; here also the object is not only, or even mainly, to give a biography of Jesus. These evangelists wish to interest their readers in our Lord, to fill them with enthusiasm for Him, to defend Him from the reproach that He was a deceiver and a false Messiah of low origin, who had been justly rejected by His own nation, and that His disciples were false witnesses. They wish to represent Him as the true Friend of the lowly, as the Messiah attested by God by means of miracles and signs, as the Saviour and Son of God Whose death was not a defeat but a propitiatory Passion willed beforehand by Himself and by God. It is true that this apology is based upon the traditional narrative; in fact, we can actually see that the later evangelists often repeat passages of the earlier evangelist, word for word. But both the apologetical aim and the advanced standpoint of the writers necessarily led to many unconscious and intentional alterations in the transmitted text. We can see indeed how the later evangelists continually transformed their exemplars in accord-

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ance with their own convictions and cast them into new forms. Hence if we wish to arrive at our Lord's genuine teaching we must submit the material transmitted in the gospels to a careful sifting, even the case of the earlier evangelists. The first process in this sifting is the passing back from the later writings to their sources. This involves the setting aside for the present of the Gospel of St. John as the latest edition of the evangelic material for which it is plainly dependent in essentials upon our first three gospels. If, as is asserted with reason, the description of Christ given in this gospel is profoundly Pauline in character, it follows, without prejudging the question in debate, that it would not be well to make this gospel the starting-point of a comparison between the teaching of Christ and that of St. Paul. St. Matthew and St. Luke are in their narrative clearly dependent upon St. Mark (or Ur-Markus), and in their records of discourses upon a source containing sayings of our Lord, to which source we must thus go back in so far as it still exists for us or can be reconstructed. Their additional material is not necessarily untrustworthy because it is additional, but seeing that we have no controlling knowledge of its origin, we are thrown back upon general considerations in judging of its authenticity.

These general considerations must, moreover, come into play even in dealing with our earliest

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accessible sources. For instance, the whole account of our Lord's teaching is set in the framework of a miraculous narrative, which in St. Matthew and St. Luke begins with the Birth, in St. Mark with the Baptism, and in all three ends with the Resurrection. Naturally even the words of our Lord thus receive a different impress, they come like the miracles from another miraculous world. Here, however, we must note how the earliest Christians, led by their enthusiastic love and their joyous faith in the miraculous, were altogether disposed to a steady accumulation of miracle, and how prone they often were to see in the miraculous element that which was essential and Divine in Jesus. All, therefore, that we can conclude with certainty from these accounts of miracles is the overwhelming impression which our Lord made upon the receptive section of His nation, an impression which in itself and of itself must have led to striking and startling occurrences. And besides, around Him Who was worshipped as Messiah, and afterwards among the Gentiles as Son of God, there moved a whole world of legend and myth, both Jewish and Gentile, that could not but attach itself to His person and dominate the conception men formed of Him. It will, however, be in correspondence with the whole spirit of Christianity as planted by our Lord, if we take as the starting-point for our appreciation of Jesus, not these elements of the gospels,

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but His Personality in its ethical and religious aspects.

Especially important, therefore, for our purpose are those traditional sayings of our Lord which cannot well be regarded as creations of a later, more developed, conception of Christ, and of a delight in the miraculous, because they are in direct opposition to a tendency of this kind. The record that our Lord, like any other Jew, came to the Baptism of Repentance was felt to be a difficulty by the Church at a later period, as we see from St. Matthew and the "Gospel of the Hebrews," and men cast about for some special reason which could have induced Him to adopt such a course. The saying : None is good but one, even God, is so altered in St. Matthew that the person of Jesus is left out of consideration ; while the last despairing utterance upon the Cross, given in St. Mark, the cry : "My God ! My God ! why hast Thou forsaken Me ?" has been softened down in other gospels by the addition of words of farewell. Importance must also be assigned to our Lord's condemnation of a craving for miracles, and to the saying concerning the sign of Jonah in its most ancient version : the only sign is the Prophet's own call to repentance.

Moreover, just as a character like that of Jesus could not possibly have been invented, so also that part of His teaching which makes such an overpowering appeal to the heart could not have

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been invented and put into His mouth. The reverence of later days sought rather for manifestations of grandeur in Godlike utterances, in the appeal to the miraculous, in prophecies of the future, in far-seeing arrangements for the later development of the Church, in careful provisions for an official body of teachers, and for ecclesiastical authorities. What is really genuine always springs naturally from the situation as it is given; out of a rich abundance it would supply something helpful for the actual need and suitable to the actual conditions of the listeners, though indeed of eternal value and abiding force. It dispenses with outward expedients, it seeks not the grandeur of mystery, but of extreme childlike simplicity, it throws up a bridge that leads straight from God to man. Therefore it was that Jesus at once won a following and acceptance among the lowly, among the poor in spirit—and yet none of these lowly ones could have created this teaching, whose truth and power will endure beyond the limits of time.

By means of such a sifting it is possible to reach a conception of our Lord's teaching that corresponds not exactly in letter yet in spirit and significance with the actual nature of His teaching. We then have a touchstone by means of which we may judge of all that does not suit the simple grandeur of Jesus, and may assign it to later development. It is true that against such a

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procedure there is raised the anxious objection that this method of strictly historical investigation may leave us with nothing that we can with certainty ascribe to Jesus. But as a matter of fact the adoption of such a critical method only results in proving how sharply and how uniquely the Personality of Jesus stands out on the page of actual history. In spite of all uncertainty regarding His words, His character will ever leave traces which we can follow up, so that we can know well enough what He was and what He willed. Indeed, it is even a blessing that we cannot be sure of His words; no one can now imagine that he has Jesus when he swears by His words, and it is for ever impossible to construct from His mouth a new law, a new system of doctrine.

### THE MESSAGE OF JESUS

The near approach of the Kingdom of Heaven forms the background of the teaching of Jesus. This conception of a Kingdom of God in Heaven above is clearly assumed as something with which every one was acquainted. Our Lord does not enter into a description of this Kingdom. It implies for Him, as for every member of the Jewish nation, the government which God exercises above over angels and heavenly bodies, but which upon earth is sadly disturbed and hindered by sin and by the reign of the devil, the dæmons, and

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the elemental powers. Every one, however, was expecting that the time would come when God would interpose on behalf of His Chosen People, and would in a mighty world-catastrophe establish His Kingdom with a strong arm. Then the pious, the lowly, and the mourners of the Psalms, would become the ruling nation in the world, and would administer God's Kingdom upon earth as His vicegerents; the meek would inherit the earth; theirs was the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus now proclaimed that the time for this revelation stood before the doors. But herein He only continued the proclamation of the Baptist. At a moment so critical He demanded, like the Baptist, absolute repentance and change of heart, that men might henceforth live only for the Kingdom so near at hand.

That which is new in the teaching of our Lord first begins where He discusses the fashion of this new life, the "Righteousness" requisite for the Kingdom of Heaven. The significance of Jesus does not lie in His portrayal of the future state of Salvation, but in His demonstration of the right way of Salvation. He is asked: "What must I do to enter into Life?" His answer is quite simple: "Thou knowest the commandments! Do what they require and thou shalt live." He desires not to overthrow the Law, but to promote its right observance. At a time of such serious import He demands an absolute fulfilment of the Law from



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the very heart, as in the sight of God so near at hand.

This fulfilment from the heart meant for One of such abounding love the fulfilment of the commandment of love towards God and man. This seemed to Him the significance of all the commandments, and He therefore would also have them all outwardly fulfilled so long as they did not offend against love. He wished to make men free to live this joyous life of love, and therefore He delivered them from all earthly cares, and from all feeling that God was far from them, by implanting in them heartfelt trust in the Heavenly Father, in His wondrous power and His loving care, in His pardoning grace and His condescension to the poor and needy. All people, whether righteous or unrighteous, above all those that were excommunicated from religious fellowship, all who could not keep and observe the thousand ordinances of Pharisaism—each and all He invited to come to this Father. To all He opened the same simple and direct way to the Father, to all the same prospect of future glory in the approaching Kingdom.

But the best that He had to give was Himself, and this He gave continually. In Himself dwelt the love which He asked for, in Him abode that heartfelt trust in God as Father, such as He would implant in men. He knew God as only a son knows a father, and His soul lay open before

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God as the son's heart lies open before the father. But this intimate heart-relationship with God He *could* not keep to Himself alone. God willed that through Jesus the same revelation should be given to the "simple and unlearned," to those who took His yoke upon them, that is, were like Him meek and lowly, and that they too should be brought into like filial relationship with Himself. It was the overwhelming power of our Lord's own Personality that availed to bring men into a life of love and faith such as He possessed.

Therefore even our Lord Himself made the future of a man dependent upon the attitude which the man adopted towards Himself. The way which He proclaimed, the method of life which He championed both in word and in character, was the only way to Salvation—hence those who rejected Him cast from them God and their own Salvation. Yet He was not ultimately concerned with Himself, but that a man should not miss recognising the Spirit of God wherever that Spirit breathed and moved. He did not regard this Spirit as confined to Himself, rather He willed that in His own messengers the Spirit should go through the whole land. Thus He did not even demand that men must come into direct communication with Himself, and slavishly imitate Him. It was not indeed possible that all who were to be saved should come to Him, or actually go about with Him. Neither, when our

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Lord had gained a disciple, did He always wish to train him up to be a personal follower, like the rich young man. For the rest, wherever Jesus was present Himself and was engaged in His ministry, there was no need for Him to establish nice distinctions between Himself and His Mission. Wherever He might be, there He Himself stood for the cause of God and of Salvation. But even where He was not present in person it could be said: "Blessed are the eyes that see the things that ye see; a greater than Solomon is here"; for here also the near approach of the Kingdom was proclaimed, the way of Salvation was preached to the poor, His Spirit breathed, wonders and signs were wrought in His name, dæmons were being put to flight, the Kingdom came.

Still less was it a matter of importance what name or title was given to Jesus. He could not indeed be brought under any formula. It was only too natural that the question should be raised whether He was not one of the prophets, whether He was not the Messiah. Nothing pleased the disciples so much as to believe that He was the Messiah. In regard to this question Jesus Himself preserved a modest reticence. The question had certainly occurred to Him. He considers whether He can be the Messiah without being a son of David. However, the decision as to who was to be the Messiah lay solely in God's hands, and would not be settled until the Kingdom came and

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was established; until then it was ordained that the Messiah should remain hidden in the Divine Counsel. Hence the question whether He Himself was to be the Messiah was a hope unexpressed, a secret between Himself and God. When, therefore, the Baptist enquired of Him whether He were not the Messiah, He gave the evasive answer: Blessed is he who is not offended in Me, who because of Me does not lose faith in the approaching Salvation. When St. Peter confessed his belief in His Messiahship, He only answered that no one should now speak of it, but that all thoughts should be directed towards that critical journey to Jerusalem. When the Galileans escorted Him as a king into Jerusalem He was silent. It was not until He stood before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate that He is reported to have claimed the dignity of Messiah. Yet what witnesses from among the friends of Jesus would those priests, who had sought to arrest Jesus by stealth, have permitted to be present at that scene? What witnesses would have ventured to force their way to the judgment seat of the Roman governor when all the disciples had fled? Here we can arrive at no certain knowledge. But it remains certain that our Lord in His teaching never proclaimed Himself as Messiah, and never demanded from any one the confession of His Messiahship; hence such a confession cannot have been regarded by Him as a condition of Salvation.

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We need not here attempt to solve the difficult problem of the meaning of the term "Son of Man." If it was an esoteric title, this would only serve to establish the truth of what we have just said. But it is probable that in some cases "Son of Man" in the mouth of our Lord only means "man." "Man is lord of the Sabbath." "Here is a Man who has not where to lay His head." In other cases it is not our Lord who speaks of the Son of Man, but the later Christian Community which adopted the written and oral apocalyptic traditions of Judaism, and therewith the esoteric terms of these "Revelations." Yet Jesus also Himself evidently believed in the Man in the Heavens as the signal of the coming Kingdom, and pictured to Himself the coming of the Kingdom under the traditional imagery of the appearance of this Being.

The heart of Jesus belonged wholly to His God, to His people, to His cause; He consecrated His life to the Divine Will. But whence was He to know that He must therefore meet death? Great though the danger might be, His faith was great enough to believe that God would intervene at the last hour. Many prophets, indeed, had suffered before Him, but now the Kingdom was coming—the Kingdom that would bring all that the Prophets had yearned for in vain, the triumph of Faith! The Kingdom might come at any moment; our Lord constantly exhorts His dis-

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ciples to watchfulness. Therefore, even at the last hour in the Last Supper, Jesus pledged His body and His life as a surety that very soon He would again drink with them the cup of fellowship in the Kingdom. In Gethsemane, when He sees the danger close upon Him, He prays the Father to let the cup—the defeat of His cause, the unfulfilment of the Divine promise—pass away from Him. Then He submitted Himself to the will of the Father, whatsoever it might be. Not until He is hanging on the Cross does He know Himself to be forsaken; but His “Why?” shows that all this was contrary to His own expectations.

Hence the prophecies of His death are to be ascribed not to Himself, but to the Christian Community which, indeed, overcame the scandal of the death because they regarded it as foretold in the Old Testament. It was for these Christians a matter of course that Jesus was initiated into this counsel of God, and that nothing could possibly happen to Him against His own will—the very opposite of that which Jesus had experienced and acknowledged in Gethsemane.

This submission to the Will of God is the highest act of Faith that we can imagine. Jesus had set all His hope upon witnessing with His own eyes the advent of the Kingdom. If this hope turned out to be vain, His faith was also vain! When, however, the decisive moment

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arrived He then learned to dispense with this form and with every definite form of faith, and to submit Himself to the Will of God, even though it was to Him unintelligible. For the rest of mankind His willingness to take this step in the dark is an expression of His capacity and determination to sacrifice everything, even the whole outward structure of His faith, to His calling, to His love for God and for His people.

The same criticism holds good also of the prophecy of the Resurrection ; for the certain expectation of the death demands as its consoling counterpart the foretelling of the Resurrection. It may well be that our Lord had spoken prophetically, but indefinitely, of a fall and a rising again. But the prophecies in the gospels first took form after the occurrence of the Resurrection visions which themselves are the expression in vision of the fact that the disciples' love for and confidence in their Master, though overwhelmed by the disaster, were not extinguished. When they again came to their homes, and when their terrified minds were restored to equilibrium, then their nerves quivered with the certainty that He was living and was with them—and so they saw Him. Yet these visions, again, were no deception. We, too, firmly believe that Jesus was not annihilated, and that the cause of faith and love has already conquered and will continue to overcome the World.

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And so we can understand how it came about that the message of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus spread through the whole world and seized upon the hearts of men, though our Lord Himself may never have spoken of them. Neither the one nor the other formed essential elements of His actual teaching; they are rather sermons in action which show the love of Jesus and the mighty power of that Love.



# JESUS AND PAUL

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM

AS we compare our summaries of the mental attitude of our Lord and of His Apostle, the first thing that strikes us is the directness, the perfect simplicity, the natural consistency of our Lord's whole character and teaching when contrasted with the dialectic and complex thought of St. Paul, who reaches far back into the past and searches into Heaven itself, while he himself bears about him the permanent traces of that one mighty shock which had, as it were, broken his life in two.

When our Lord gives His highest and most spiritual teaching about God, He speaks as if what He says could not be otherwise. He does not dream of connected proof; instead of this He points to Nature and human life, as if God had plainly written down everything there, as if every whole-hearted man could read there everything that He, Jesus, had to say to the people. He judges simply by the instinct of His own good heart, and believes that men are also capable of so regarding and judging of the World and of life. There is with Him no system, no definite theology

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or Christology, no dogma of human depravity and of a plan of Salvation whereby this depravity might be overcome. He does not think and speak of the relationship between faith and good works. Applying Himself directly to the case in hand, He declares His joyous conviction, His forgiveness of sin, His earnest warning, His stern judgment. His thoughts do not soar away into the heights of Heaven, nor do they busy themselves with the primæval counsels of God. He abides ever upon earth, casting here and there a glance into the under-world as popular thought conceived of it. Here upon earth it was that the evil spirits whom He combats have their existence. Here upon earth the Kingdom of God would descend. And even of this Kingdom of the future He does not give a finished picture. He certainly, like His people, believes in miracles and in dæmons; but these by their very nature do not admit of being forced within the limits of a theological system; nor does He profess to know more about them than His own fellow-countrymen. And even concerning His fellow-men He has no special doctrine; above all, no dogma of their universal sinfulness, such as St. Paul teaches. He well knows that none is good save God—not even Himself; but He does not on this account regard mankind as corrupt and depraved. He knows of those who because they are pure of heart can see God, of merciful, even among the Samaritans, who will

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obtain mercy, of meek and gentle ones who are destined to inherit the earth. It is true that of the majority He believes that unless they reform they will come to destruction, like those who are caught away by sudden death. He does not cover up the sins of gross sinners, of publicans and harlots ; but He is convinced that all sinners are capable of conversion and repentance, that they all can take the narrow way and enter into life. With joy He promises in God's name forgiveness of sin to all who repent—not only to those who come to Him, but also to the publican who speaks in the Temple alone with his God, as well as to every returning prodigal. He never, like St. Paul, makes the additional demand of faith in the propitiatory sacrifice of His death. The only propitiation that He knows is repentance and conversion—the confession and petition : “Forgive us our debts.” Here the only condition is the willingness to show to one's neighbour the same indulgence that one begs for oneself. According to our Lord, the faith which avails is trust in God's power to help in time of need, and thankful acceptance of the message of the approaching Kingdom ; according to St. Paul, it is the laying hold of the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus together with His life-giving Resurrection. For St. Paul, God only came really near to mankind in the Death of Christ ; for our Lord, He is with every one who says to Him, “Our Father.” Therefore our Lord

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can feel all confidence in the single religious soul—indeed, even in the sinner who in penitence seeks after God; while St. Paul can feel none, unless there is faith in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. St. Paul is convinced that this bond of faith is further strengthened by the sacramental influence of the rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; while our Lord lives in His God like a bird in the open air.

In one word, we cannot disguise the fact that St. Paul had not the same conception of God as our Lord. St. Paul's conception of God still includes traits of Oriental despotism and caprice; He hardens the hearts of men and nations if He so wills, nor is there hope of moving or opposing His will; and if He then long delays to punish, this is accounted as great long-suffering. The potter, in fact, has a right to make with his clay what he pleases: man is therefore to his God but a potsherd if God has no better purpose for him than that. Yet though the Divine government is so arbitrary, still God is bound by limitations if He wishes to approach mankind—again just like an Oriental ruler who cannot come into touch with his people except through a mediator. He approaches mankind only in the Son, and the Son also can approach only, like a king's son in disguise, in the form of a servant. Above all, if God in love would draw near to His enemies and would reach out His hand to them, He requires

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the propitiatory shedding of blood. It is true that God shows His magnanimity in that He Himself provides this sin-offering—yet He must provide it; and even if it were not necessary for Himself, still, the Law, the angels of the Law—Sin, Death, and the Devil—have a right thereto; man is their slave and must be redeemed. God must “resign” to them His Son, as the Baal of Tyre was obliged to sacrifice his son to the god of heaven. No doubt these doctrinal propositions are intended to express the profoundest and noblest truth, but the point is that St. Paul could not shake himself free from these modes of thought and expression; nor, in consequence, has the Church been able to do so up to this present time. Lastly, between the Christ, as St. Paul conceives of Him and regards Him as having appeared in Jesus, and the actual Jesus of Nazareth, there exists a difference like that between a constellation which is supposed to represent a person and the actual person; though here we must, of course, remember that, according to ancient belief, in the constellation the heavenly form of the glorified hero really greeted his worshipper. St. Paul, indeed, raised the earthly Jesus with all His love and because of His love into Heaven, but he therewith stripped Him of all distinct lifelike and tangible features and outline. Before Christ came upon earth He was—we cannot quite say what—certainly not God; that would have been incon-

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ceivable to St. Paul—neither was He the Heavenly Man—for He is the last, not the first Adam—He must first become man: as the express image of God He is accurately speaking only a mere copy, just as upon earth He does not become exactly like men, but only bears the image of sinful flesh. Christ is strong and real for St. Paul only as the indwelling power of Love, as his better self, as the new Life which had seized hold of him, and as the dying which he continually bore about in his own body. These two impulses of his innermost soul he transfers into the "Life of Jesus." He knows the earthly Jesus only as the Dying and Risen One—and he makes Him one with the transcendental Heavenly Christ that was already known to him. The Christ of St. Paul is thus both the indwelling power of the Spirit and the reflection of the same upon the background of the theological speculation of those times. What an absolutely different impression we receive from the actual Jesus as, in spite of the way in which His portrait is furbished up by the evangelists, He stands before us—that joyous, kindly, child-like Man, who eats and drinks, questions and hesitates, fights and struggles, believes and hopes, prays and submissively sinks into the dust before God! He upon the Cross knew only that God had forsaken Him—He knew not why He was forsaken; while the Pauline Christ obediently takes upon Himself a death which had been planned beforehand for

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the Redemption of mankind, and which was the supreme object of His earthly existence.

On the one hand, we have a mythological drama which develops according to a fixed Divine plan and at a definite point of time, wherein Christ plays His assigned part, and wherein mankind, represented as forming all alike one multitude of lost and helpless souls, passes on, willingly or unwillingly, to meet its fore-ordained doom of condemnation or grace—and yet a drama realised in personal experience, wherein the action of the hero and the pervading plot are most deeply felt, and are the passionate expression of personal conviction—this is Paul. On the other hand, we have a human soul, absolutely sure of God, living a life which was the simple expression of the inmost self, full of loving self-sacrifice, victorious both in conflict and defeat, finding indeed in defeat the truest victory, ever seeking and ever finding the Will of God, always fulfilling though not always comprehending that Will—this is Jesus.

### THE REASON OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR LORD AND ST. PAUL

If, then, Paul was a disciple of Jesus, did the disciple understand the Master? Or has he created a new Christ, and therewith a new Christianity

Or, does not the difference between the two seem quite inevitable when we consider the way

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in which St. Paul was once for all won over to Jesus? Was it not simply the expression of the fact that the actual Paul conceived of the actual Jesus in the only way possible in his situation and under the given circumstances?

Seeing that the Apostle throughout his whole ministry only set forth his own soul, originally so unique and many-sided, and now enriched and dominated by the personal experience of his conversion, the necessary result was a new doctrine answering to this personality. It is possible that the result might have been a religion quite different from the religion of Jesus, if this conversion had not been determined by some influence which proceeded from the character of Jesus. Before we attempt to define and to explain this determining influence more exactly, we shall do well to realise once for all how many circumstances worked together to make St. Paul cast into quite different forms than those of Jesus all that he, inspired perhaps by this influence, had to impart to mankind. If we then find that an extraordinarily large portion of the difference is capable of explanation, we shall be the more disposed to venture the hypothesis that between these two historical characters, which stand in such complete opposition to one another, there exists, nevertheless, a firm inward bond of connection, without which St. Paul would scarcely have thought of calling himself a disciple of Christ, and the disciples of



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Jesus would scarcely have recognised him as a Christian.

St. Paul was conscious that he was dependent upon the personality of our Lord. To him Jesus was the Giver, he, Paul, feels himself the receiver. This was also the attitude of the rest of the disciples towards our Lord; such also was the attitude of many another who afterwards came to know Christ more nearly. In His presence the strong felt weak, the noble sinful, the wise as in need of direction. When we see that Jesus experienced direct intimate communion with God the Father, while St. Paul needed a mediator, and indeed this Jesus as the Mediator, do we not discover in this very fact the gulf that separates Jesus from all the rest of mankind? It is only through the influence which streams forth upon us from Jesus that there is formed in us that disposition of joyous trust in God such as Jesus naturally felt. Jesus, in the power of His own spirit, could judge of humanity, to which He Himself also belonged, otherwise—that is, more confidently and hopefully—than those who, ever conscious of their own frailty and weakness, instinctively judge of the whole of mankind by themselves. It is only by directing our gaze to the noble heroes of the human race that we can overcome such pessimistic feelings—and so, even St. Paul's judgment of mankind is full of confident hope when he sees it inspired by

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the Spirit of Jesus. The requirement of a propitiation actually offered once for all is to be explained from the earnestness of a self-consciousness, which feeling its own guilt cannot arrive at joyous assurance of the Divine Grace, and is compelled to look for some external guarantee. It was only to be expected that these spiritual requirements should have taken definite forms in accordance with contemporary ideas, and that they should have helped that feeling of dependence upon the strong personality and confident faith of Jesus to find expression in conceptions of Messianic belief and propitiatory sacrifice.

If St. Paul were once convinced that help came from Jesus, and that this help was alike powerful and sufficient, in speaking of Jesus he could not but judge Him by standards which embraced the whole world; he must assign a power of world-wide significance to his Christ. Without this conviction he would not have ventured himself among the Gentiles, nor could he have carried through the conflict among them. Gentile sin cried even more loudly to Heaven than the covert hypocrisy of Judaism and the ordinary sins of the Galilæan folk. The Greeks who asked for wisdom needed other arguments, and could endure longer chains of reasoning than were desired by, or could be appreciated by, the Galilæans, to whom a striking saying, or an appealing simile, were all-sufficient. Besides, St. Paul's mind was formed

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under the warping influence of the Rabbinic schools, he had acquired habits of proving all things, and of defending his theses against all possible objections, of tracing mysterious relationships everywhere, above all, of arduous study of the written letter of the Old Testament, and of enticing therefrom hidden truths of deep and comprehensive import. For the simple understanding of the religion of Jesus such a disposition of mind was fatal, but it was only the more useful to the Apostle of the Gentiles when in conflict with his Judaistic and Jewish opponents, whom he could only smite out of the field with these weapons. It was not the fault of St. Paul, but of circumstances, that in after times St. Paul's controversial writings were, in their turn, treated as Law and Oracle, to the letter of which men must for all time bow in subjection.

It has also been often pointed out that St. Paul has no feeling for pure nature, that he cannot rejoice in nature, but has ears only for the groaning of mankind and of the living creation, that he knows God only from the terrors of his own conscience, from the Sacred Book, from the surging sea of human history, and, last of all, from the loving sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross. How infinitely more direct and intimate is the insight of Jesus, as He sees the brightness of the Divine love, even in the sunshine as it streams upon men, even in the birds as they merrily flit hither and

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thither, even in the flowers, with their many-coloured array! St. Paul, again, was not brought up in the country, but in a city of commerce and learning; he had spent the best of his days in lecture-rooms and in poring over the roll of the Law; also, in after days, he always sought to be in great cities; the country meant for him only wearisome exile. Jesus grew up amid the most pleasant surroundings, in country lanes full of life and interest, the little cottage of His parents did not afford Him more than needful shelter: He gained His knowledge of the Old Testament far more from the mouth of His parents and in the synagogue on the Sabbath than from the book itself. He preached on the seashore and loved to wander with His disciples through the fertile fields of Galilee; He spent with them whole nights in the open, and often had not a place where to lay His head. The air of the country, the air of the town, fresh joyous life in the open air and the dust of the schools produce and require different styles of teaching—however much more of originality there may be in the one, the world of culture can as little dispense with the other.

St. Paul becomes still more strange to us as we consider a trait in his nature which we may even safely call pathological, wherein, of course, no judgment is passed upon the worth of St. Paul's personality. His disposition to see everywhere only sharp contrasts, and to drive every-

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thing to extremes, his tempestuous temper, his irritability and susceptibility, but also the courageous boldness of an imagination which led him to resolve to lay the whole world at the feet of Jesus within one generation, the zeal which drove him from city to city, from country to country, the touching love and care he shows for the churches, again those cries of exulting triumph, those deep groanings of defeat, that yearning for death, that feeling that he suffered with the death of Christ, that he dwelt in a body of death, that dread lest afterwards he must be naked without body—above all, the suddenness of his conversion and his obsession by Jesus as by a second self—all these characteristics hang together with a condition of the nervous system, which at times led him away into ecstasy, and caused him to see visions, which indeed produced the vision of light at Damascus. All the utterances of a soul of this kind must naturally sound more passionate, more fantastic, less restful than what Jesus brings forth so lovingly and tenderly from the good treasure of His heart. With Jesus everything springs forth from the sure and abiding riches of His soul, like a clear well, whose waters, springing from the depths of earth, lie embosomed amid flowers and grass, with a kindly and refreshing gift for the thirsty; with St. Paul we often feel that we stand before a restless volcano whose eruptive fires only tell of a still fiercer heat within.

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And this fiery spirit never experienced that strong and restful influence of Jesus which descended upon all who came into personal touch with Him. The fact that St. Paul had never seen or heard our Lord when He was on earth, and that he, in his zeal for his own independence, had also held aloof from those who had known Jesus, was in every sort of way fatal for the Apostle. However much or however little he might know of Jesus, however highly he valued the Person, the work, and the words of our Lord, that grand, noble, and gentle form of Jesus could never of itself rise up before his eyes as he thought, taught, and wrote, as he loved and contended. He had never observed the working of an utterance of Jesus in the environment in which it was spoken. The simple human character of Jesus, His human weakness, His homely style, His childlike mind were foreign to St. Paul. We must even question whether St. Paul would have been always satisfied with our Lord if he had known Him ! and further, whether St. Paul, if he had under such circumstances submitted to the domination of the Spirit of Jesus, would have blossomed out into a personality of such capital importance as he became when left to himself. Nor is it a matter for surprise or regret that the seed scattered by Jesus, after falling upon this alien ground, sprang up into quite new life, and brought forth other fruit than that which grew in Galilee.

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St. Paul is indeed separated from Jesus, not only in time, but between him and the life of Jesus there also stand the Cross and the miracle of the Resurrection. Such events must have altered every conception formed of our Lord, even by those who had known Him personally ; how much more must one, who had never seen our Lord but had only heard of Him in the light of these great events, have been affected by this tremendous change in point of view ! The disciples of Jesus themselves now saw their Lord in another light—St. Paul knew Him only in this light. The accursed One Who was hanged upon the Cross ! This was perhaps the first that St. Paul heard about our Lord. Not so even those who were the personal opponents of Jesus ; they did not yet so regard Him while He was still going about among them in the plenitude of power and in childlike innocence. Who that had seen Him in His ministry and had heard of His wondrous works could like St. Paul have thought at once and exclusively of the Cross ? But after Jesus had once died upon the Cross it was equally impossible to forget this end, and every one that now heard of Him, heard of Him as the Crucified, so that all the nobility and goodness of the life were, as it were, shut off from the view by this horrible death, or stood in strange incongruous contrast therewith. This contrast was most strongly emphasised by the proclamation of the Resurrection. One who

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had first become known from this point of view could no longer be judged by human standards ; such an one advanced claims to which the answer could only be either reverent worship or indignant rejection—unless, indeed, one were tortured against both by a cold-hearted scepticism, as was evidently not the case with St. Paul.

Finally, we must return once again to his conversion as the event which alienated him from himself, from his past, from all to whom he had looked for authoritative guidance, and from his fellow-countrymen, which crucified him to the world and the world to him. It set him outside every human relationship, even that with the primitive apostles as men—what they once were was all one to him—indeed, even out of relationship with the earthly Jesus. He, too, was crucified according to the flesh, and no longer exists for St. Paul who lives only with the Christ of his own experience. He now demanded of all others who wished to be saved a similar conversion, an absolute breach with the former life, a death to the world, a life in Christ alone. Accordingly he required that, like himself, every one should judge himself and all mankind as corrupt, lost, and condemned ; every one must join with him in regarding the Cross and the fellowship in the death of Christ as that which was alone essential in Christianity. Jesus knew no such breach with Himself, with His past, with His nation, with His



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religion. He wished only to set forth the true significance of the religion of His nation, He needed only to give what He had from the beginning. St. Paul is therefore a revolutionary influence, while our Lord spiritualises, deepens, quickens, brings into joyous harmony with God and man powers which had ever been present in the soul, but which had not yet been discovered, or at least not rightly awakened.

### THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN ST. PAUL AND OUR LORD

Since there are so many grounds for difference between our Lord and St. Paul in outlook and in modes of expression, any agreement which nevertheless exists between them must be the more deeply seated, seeing that it unites two minds so different in character and connects for all time the name and personality of St. Paul so indissolubly with the cause of Jesus. It is now for us to discover this unity, and where possible to explain it. Here we must beware of the danger of too hastily magnifying instances of likeness into proofs of relationship and therefrom at once concluding that St. Paul was dependent upon our Lord, for we know that similar ideas and movements have arisen from different and independent sources if the circumstances of the times so required or suggested. It is necessary, therefore, to consider

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such phenomena in their origin and mutual connection, and always to enquire whether in any particular point dependence on the part of the Apostle can be actually proved and rendered intelligible.

At first sight a special instance of relationship between St. Paul and our Lord seems to be afforded in the liberal attitude which both adopt towards the Law. In this case the stranger among the apostles would seem to have understood Jesus better than His most intimate disciples and the early Jewish Christian Community. But here we must at once note that St. Paul, in controversy with Jewish-Christian champions of the Law, *never appeals to Jesus Himself*, as he certainly would not have failed to do if he had known that Jesus had adopted an attitude towards the Law similar to his own. On the contrary, St. Paul testifies that the Messiah in the flesh was subjected to the Law and that Jesus was a minister of the Circumcision: he thus assumes that the earthly life of our Lord was one of loyal and perfect obedience to the Law. Accordingly St. Paul, at all events, was not conscious that in this point he was in any way affected by an influence proceeding from Jesus; indeed, such an influence is here altogether excluded by the Apostle's behaviour. It could have been transmitted to him only through the instrumentality of the original apostles and the Primitive Community; but the

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Primitive Community, as a whole, took its colour from the followers of St. James, who opposed any relaxation of the ordinances concerning meats, and even a Peter and a John did not adopt a more liberal opinion until they were moved thereto by the initiative of St. Paul, and then an influence proceeding from Jerusalem sufficed to make St. Peter again vacillate. Even according to the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter must first be persuaded by a vision before he would enter into a Gentile house and there exercise his ministry. It seems rather that the liberal influence in primitive Christianity, in so far as it was existent previously to St. Paul, proceeded from Greek-speaking Jews who had grown up in the lands of the Gentiles—like Stephen, whom St. Paul had probably heard ; or, again, those men of Cyprus and Cyrene in Antioch who first accepted Gentiles as Christians without Circumcision. It is therefore impossible that our Lord, Whose conduct in this connection would certainly have determined the attitude of those Jewish Christians that had known Him, could have taken up an attitude towards the Law similar in character to that of St. Paul. St. Paul, it is true, held that the Law was holy, righteous, and good, but that it was given only to establish wrath. With the death of Jesus its claim was satisfied, and it was now abolished ; for Christians there was now no law. Here St. Paul makes no distinction between moral and ceremonial ordi-

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nances—all action demanded by the Law is vain. Help alone lies in faith in the propitiation wrought in Christ, and in the new life which the Spirit Himself works in the faithful. Jesus never spoke thus of the Law. He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil. He presupposes the sacrificial cultus and celebrates the Jewish festivals; He has no wish to abolish the Sabbath. It is true that for Him the whole Law is summed up in the commandment of Love. But because this is for Him the significance of the whole Law and of each commandment He therefore holds fast to the Law; only He expounds every precept according to the commandment of love; and where on behalf of love and spirituality He seems to contend against a particular precept, it is only because He wishes to introduce a more spiritual interpretation, and in such a case His arguments are always derived from the Law itself.

It is true that we cannot but recognise the similarity of the tendency to liberalism in our Lord and St. Paul; but seeing that St. Paul in his attitude towards the Law cannot possibly be directly dependent upon our Lord, we must try to explain their agreement here in some other way.

The liberal attitude which St. Paul adopts towards the Law is closely connected with his participation in and championship of the Mission to the Gentiles, and with his conviction that the salvation of God in Christ also belonged from the

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very first unconditionally to the Gentiles. There would seem to be correspondence here if our Lord likewise adopted a friendly attitude towards those who were not Jews. It is true that the parables of the Great Supper, of the Prodigal Son, of the Lost Sheep, and the Lost Piece of Money, do not refer to the Gentiles, but to the publicans and sinners whom Jesus received into His company in spite of the protest of the Pharisees. Yet did not our Lord also open wide the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven to the Samaritans and the Gentiles? We must, indeed, distinguish between the two cases. The Samaritans observed the Law, were circumcised, and were descended from Abraham. In standing up for them Jesus speaks as a Northern Israelite, who takes the side of the Samaritans just as He takes the side of the Galilæans in opposition to Judæa because He knows them better and had found also in them acts of loving-kindness. Even here, therefore, it is a question of a more liberal interpretation of the Law, not of compromise with Gentiles who knew not the Law. And yet Jesus was surprised at the faith of the Gentile Centurion and the Canaanitish Woman; indeed, by her faith the Canaanitish Woman really overpersuaded our Lord. Here, therefore, genuine faith caused Him to take exceptional steps, which also opened before Him the distant prospect that after the establishment of the Kingdom of God the Gentiles also, attracted

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by its glory, would of themselves come to take part therein. It is true that we here receive a revelation of our Lord's large-heartedness; yet still we read: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel." The disciples are not to go into the ways of the Gentiles, nor to enter into the cities of the Samaritans. Such, at least, the Primitive Community conceived and held to be the teaching of our Lord—again a proof that St. Paul's friendly attitude towards the Gentiles could not have been derived from Jesus through the tradition of the Primitive Community. Here, again, in his controversy with the Primitive Community he makes his appeal to the Scriptures and to results of his ministry, not to the teaching and practice of Jesus.

The first Christians, indeed, regarded St. Paul's Mission to the Gentiles, together with his liberal attitude towards the Law, as an innovation; as such they either tolerated or attacked it; and St. Paul himself does not judge of it otherwise; he is, indeed, proud of the fact that here he goes his own way in the power of Divine revelation. In Antioch he demonstrates even to St. Peter that he, the "pillar-apostle," did not yet comprehend the liberty of the Gospel and the significance of Christ. St. Paul, when contrasting himself with St. Peter, felt that because of his own inward experience he was raised far above Petrine Christianity and Petrine tradition concerning Jesus.

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Still less need we assume that St. Paul must have been dependent upon our Lord, seeing that they both of them recognise and advocate ideas and aims which were current at that time, and without which no teacher would have been regarded as a sincerely religious man. Both St. Paul and our Lord, for instance, believe in the power of evil spirits ; they fight against these, they hope for, indeed they already discern, their immediate overthrow. But every one at that time believed in evil spirits and suffered under their tyranny ; indeed the belief in the approaching Kingdom of God was bound up with the hope for the overthrow of the Kingdom of the dæmons. Again, Jesus was only concerned with the spirits of disease which assailed the mental and bodily health of His fellow-countrymen as they believed ; while St. Paul thinks of the elemental powers of the stars, of the authorities in the heavenly places. Our Lord was simply a prophet, His mind was set upon giving help to His own Galilæan fellow-countrymen ; St. Paul thinks of the whole Universe—upon, beneath, and above the earth. Again, St. Paul only watches while his Heavenly Christ overcomes these elemental powers. This is the necessary consequence of his metaphysical belief in the Messiah. Our Lord, mingling in the ordinary life of men, sets to work and affords practical help as each case of need comes before Him.

Again, both our Lord and St. Paul wage war

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against sin and believe in and promise a deliverance from sin. Here the coincidence is still more general in character, for the warfare against sin continued throughout the whole history of Israel since the time of the Prophets, and it was a matter of common belief that the End of the World would bring with it deliverance from sin.

Thus the special point of agreement lies rather in the fact that in both cases the present time is regarded as the time of Salvation and of help. For nothing could well be more different than the way in which in each case this deliverance from sin is conceived—in the one case propitiation, in the other repentance; on the one hand, the need of a mediator, on the other, arms spread wide for every sinner that repenteth.

And yet the consciousness of living in the very presence of the End of the World runs through the whole thought of those days. Much here and there which appears to us revolutionary, severe, anti-social, and opposed to the interests of civilised life, is due to the prevalence of this feeling that the End was near at hand. Nevertheless it is to be noted that our Lord has a soul more open than St. Paul's to the beauty of the earth, to the just claims of marriage and the innocence of children, to the incidents and business of daily life, and that the Kingdom of God, as our Lord in accordance with the popular ideas of His times imagined it to Himself, is a religious idyll upon earth, including,



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among other things, a festal eating and drinking before God ; while St. Paul from the very first excludes flesh and blood, eating and drinking, from the Kingdom of God, and knows only of a future spiritual life wherein the only thing that can be called material is the glory of heavenly light. Moreover, according to St. Paul, the Christian Community is to be caught up from the earth in the clouds to meet Christ in the air. We thus see how our Lord always plants Himself firmly upon the earth ; while St. Paul would escape from earth and abides hovering between earth and heaven.

Yet it cannot be denied that the energy of the expectation of the End as it appears in St. Paul has about it something which is essentially Christian. The Pharisees, it is true, expected the End, but we do not find among them the same certainty that the End was so very near at hand that we find among those Messianic sects who were abhorrent to the Pharisees because of this revolutionary expectation. The burning zeal of the first Christians in all their thought and action, their revolutionary expectation of the near approach of the Kingdom of God, of the Second Coming of Christ, was sufficiently contagious, above all for a nature so excitable as St. Paul's. He must have been aroused to earnest and anxious debate with himself, he must have been stirred to the very depths of his being, he must have been

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continually faced with the question: If the Christians are right, if Jesus, after all, is the promised Christ and will soon come to judge the World, how will it go with me His persecutor? what will become of the Gentiles and what of the Jews?

Now, to one in such a state of anxious suspense the message of the fatherly love of God Who loves His foes, Who in His love had also sent Jesus and suffered Him to die for sinners, of the loving-kindness of Jesus Himself, of the forgiveness of sins which He proclaimed and dispensed, of His commandment of love and of His own realisation of that commandment in Himself—all this must have come as balm to the soul and as a glad promise of bliss to come. All this St. Paul may have heard from those whom he persecuted. Above all, the power of love in themselves and their enthusiastic love for Jesus their Lord may have won his heart in spite of himself. However this may have been, at all events a beam of the love of Jesus in His own disciples must have lighted upon St. Paul and inwardly transfigured him. Our Lord's belief in the love of God and in the victory of love in the world, the belief that love is the highest thing in Heaven and on earth—this it was that seized upon St. Paul's imagination and became to him a new revelation. It was really this love that he saw before Damascus, it was of this love that he became the chosen vessel;

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against this love he neither could nor would rebel. Indeed, it was perhaps, after all, only this one message—Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures—which we know for certain that St. Paul received from the Primitive Community. This sacrifice of love it was that seized upon his soul and never loosened its hold. This conception can scarcely have been derived from Jesus Himself; but the disciples of Jesus could not have ascribed it to Him and could not have so interpreted His death unless Jesus had lived His own and God's forgiving love before their eyes. Hence it was the Spirit of Jesus that came over St. Paul, and in so far he rightly regarded Jesus as his Lord, and rightly called himself an apostle of Jesus.

It was also this mighty power of Love that delivered him from his bondage to the Law. This it was that drove him joyous in love and confident of victory among the Gentiles, that seemed to him a treasure so great and so precious as that therewith he might gain over the whole world. While it spoke of absolute liberty, it nevertheless afforded a complete security against all anti-nomianism—a firm basis upon which he might establish a new people of God in place of ancient Israel. St. Paul, just like our Lord, demanded of men a love which extends even to enemies and taught that such was the character of the love of God. This teaching really lies in the inmost heart of St. Paul when he proclaims his doctrine of a

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propitiation which God vouchsafes to men in His Son. God therewith "establishes" His love; it is the love of Christ shown in this act of self-sacrifice that—as St. Paul himself expresses it—"constrains" him to work as an apostle. It is true that his representation of this joyous conviction is plentiful in dogma—but this does not do away with the fact that our Lord and St. Paul were at one in that which was essential, that St. Paul was here dependent upon our Lord, and that he himself knew what this essential truth was and Whom he had to thank for it.

### ST. PAUL'S IMPORTANCE FOR THE WORK OF OUR LORD

St. Paul, however, not only received Jesus into himself and reproduced Him after his own fashion, but this reproduction is of so profound, lofty, and spiritual a character that Christianity and the cause of Jesus was thereby promoted in many respects. It is not enough for a cause to be great and good; the best movement may, as it were, lose itself in the sand unless it is conducted outside the narrow circle wherein it first made its appearance and is directed into the right channels; unless some one appears who also knows the world beyond the mountains and divines that the water, which here springs up and whose preciousness is here scarcely realised, will afford

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to the great world beyond the refreshment that is needed and is being sought for. St. Paul was all this to the cause of Jesus. Here was a precious treasure, but it lay in the narrow, confined field of Judaism; its bright, sparkling radiance was hidden, the world could only pass it by. Then there came a merchant that way seeking goodly pearls. At first he was enraged with those who directed him to that field. "It is a field of blood, a curse rests upon it!" he cries. "Blasphemers alone seek there blessing and life!" But as he sought to drive away those who had no eyes for aught but the treasure, behold, his own eyes were dazzled by the heavenly radiance of pure gold, by the unearthly radiance of that precious jewel, and he went and sold all that he had and bought it and carried it away over land and sea to the palace of the emperor, and could never be weary of singing its praises and declaring that by its means all the misery of earth could be abolished and all the dark clouds overshadowing mankind could be driven away. The former guardians of the treasure murmured at him and called him thief and intruder; but even they were made richer by him, and, half unwillingly, they allowed him to go his way. There were at that time several Messianic sects; it was, indeed, a peculiar feature of this sect of the Christians that they believed in One crucified; their life of love, their simplicity of mind, were unique; so also was much of their

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interpretation of the Law. But all this only made one more strange phenomenon in those strange times; at all events, a phenomenon confined to the sphere of Judaism. After the fall of Jerusalem, and under the new order of things introduced by the Rabbis, this sect would have been excommunicated from Judaism as heretical and would have come to nothing in some corner of Palestine—just as it actually happened in the case of Ebionitism, which was merely narrow Jewish Christianity crystallised into a sect. Thus Judaism—indeed, even Jewish Christianity—was not conscious of the treasure it had received. Indeed, Jesus Himself had not clearly realised that the might of His faith and of His love was sufficient to overleap all national boundaries, to make all legal ordinances unnecessary, and to outlast the World itself. In childlike simplicity He gave what He had—it was a Paul who showed the world what it was that He had given.

St. Paul well discerned the danger which lay in his opponents' narrowness and devotion to the Law. In his relation to the Primitive Apostles he felt himself independent; he was quite conscious of his greater success, and was proud of it. The visions and revelations he received he felt to be a special privilege; on other occasions also he could boast of inspired wisdom. When engaged in controversy his conception of the Gospel seemed to him the only right one. He felt his

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own special importance so keenly that he believed that in his sufferings he filled up what was wanting in the sufferings of Christ. Such a man one might have expected to become the head of a sect, the founder of a new Church and religion. But, with extraordinary moderation and quite in opposition to his theory, he not only tolerated the Primitive Community, in so far as it allowed him a free hand, but also recognised this community as the foremost champion of the cause of Christ. Even for him this Church was the source whence the Gospel sprang; this Church he would serve, for Christ too was a minister of the Circumcision; to this Church he would also attach the churches of his converts. Accordingly he himself went up to Jerusalem to make the acquaintance of St. Peter, and up to the time of his departure from the East, in spite of much unpleasantness, he ever maintained communion with Jerusalem. It is due to him that things never came to a definite schism; on the other side far more was done to bring about than to hinder such a schism, and at the best St. Paul was let alone. In a body where communion was preserved after this fashion it came about quite as a matter of course that the narrow, Judaistic section succumbed and was cast out of fellowship; but the Church's connection with its first days was maintained. This continuity was of the highest importance for the steady and even development of the Church and for its sense of

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legitimacy of descent : practically it meant that thereby the Gospel tradition concerning Jesus was preserved for the Gentile-Christian Church. The sad experience of later days makes us realise what Christianity here owes to St. Paul : for though the separation from Rome, carried out so bravely by our Reformers when it was forced upon them, was absolutely necessary, still this schism has brought with it serious loss to the cause of Christianity.

St. Paul also understood how to justify the new ideas which he proclaimed and the new ways by which he travelled before the bar of the old authorities and from their own documents. We may well describe his treatment of the Law and Prophets as violent in the extreme, yet by this means Christianity acquired a feeling of self-confidence not only in the presence of Judaism, but also in the presence of God's Holy Word and of the Gentile World which sought for sacred written credentials. Alien though the theology of St. Paul may appear to us, it was by no means alien to the thought and to the spiritual needs of those times ; St. Paul made it possible for his times and for Christianity to conceive of their treasure under their own forms of thought, to interpret and to realise it as a consistent logical whole. Before his own contemporaries he could appear as a thinker ; his successors may perhaps have surpassed him in circumstantiality and



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logical exactness, but none of them ever attained to his profundity of thought, to his wideness of outlook, and to the genuinely Christian character of his system: all that they had of these excellencies was learnt from him. So long as antique thought ruled the world—that is, beyond the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation up to the days of the Rationalists—St. Paul was the leading Christian thinker, and his leading was as necessary to Christendom as Christian thought itself.

Now though St. Paul's forms of thought cannot in these days suffice, and never have sufficed to contain the spirit, yet in the arguments, and still more in the heart-piercing appeals of his epistles, we meet with ideas and motives which are valid for all time, though we must often first translate them into the language of our modern thought.

The limits set to this book do not permit us to select and to discuss even the most important of those conceptions of the Apostle that have abiding significance; we must confine ourselves to suggestion.

St. Paul's revelation of Christian freedom in regard to every external rule, be it ever so sacred, and his deliverance of Christianity from all national limitations, lie open before the eyes of all men; we all live by these truths; only we have to make more use of them and to extend them yet further. Just as St. Paul has won for us freedom from the

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law of works, so we must contend for freedom from every law of dogma, and must raise our protest against the claim to set limits to clear thinking, free investigation, and inward integrity.

It is true that the antique conception of the incarnation of a heavenly being, with which St. Paul has connected the revelation of the love of God in Christ, is alien to our ways of thinking. And yet we also feel that we cannot experience communion with God, or realise the help that comes to us from above, unless God enters into our human relationships, unless He comes to us in men, confirms us, appoints us our duty, orders and governs the conditions and circumstances of our life among our fellow-men. Only we must not set Christ in isolation, we must regard Him as *the* place, as *the* person in the sphere of humanity where God's love towards us is revealed most purely and most powerfully, where God Himself appeared *definitely and decisively* for our salvation, while in all other men His will is manifested only very partially and imperfectly. Again in the same way, as we to-day accept the truth that the purer and nobler souls must ever suffer most from the sin of others, we must not isolate the propitiatory sufferings of Christ. In such souls humanity feels the wretchedness of its moral condition, in their valiant faith and joyous love the struggle against evil begins, and results in a victory which in the end is recognised by and

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benefits even those who did not perceive the evil, indeed, even worked and originated it. It is ever so that single souls must first win by suffering and by conflict that from which thousands of other souls live, as may be seen in societies great and small.

The very heart of Pauline doctrine is the conception of the Death and Resurrection with Christ. This we can also experience. Whenever a pure and strong personality wins our heart we belong no longer to the self which we had from the first, but we live for the new self which has first given to our life significance and force. This is the effect upon us of all personalities with an influence to which it is worth while submitting ourselves. Above all, this is the effect of Christ upon us, and most of all of the Christ Who died for the sake of Love and Truth.

In this detachment from the petty self with its own selfish interests, in his life for the one good and noble cause of God, St. Paul experienced—what we all must possess if we wish to do anything in the world—a joy in believing, which helped him to make any sacrifice and to overcome any obstacle, which made him indeed look upon obstacles as means of progress—a joyous faith which made him feel that all things must work together for good. Here we all have only to learn from St. Paul, and as we read his confessions of faith and follow him in the footsteps of his journeys

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and in the details of his labours, we still ever trace this joy of his as a living and quickening power.

The greatest hindrance to this joy is the sad experience of sin, our own and that of others, which ever clings to us and makes us lose heart. The spiritual genius of a Paul could even include sin in the Divine Purpose, so that God Himself willed sin and concluded all men under sin, that He might lead all men to lay hold upon Grace, that He might by hardening some gain the others, and then again by means of those who were gained might save the lost. We, too, if we would not again and again lose heart and surrender to sin in the world, must take to ourselves something of this heroic faith which, as St. Paul shows, need not lead to an attitude of acquiescence and of *laissez-faire* in the presence of sin. The boldness which the Apostle shows in his theory of the Universe was made possible for him by his willingness to recognise absolutely and without reserve the unfettered freedom of the Divine Omnipotence in judgment, in condemnation, and justification, in hardening and in showing mercy. He allows God alone to rule as the ultimate cause of all human action and human sin, indeed, even in his own inner life, where God works both to will and to perform. Here it is certain that in the last resort St. Paul is right; wherever God is really worshipped He must be all in all; there can

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be no compromise—as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Schleiermacher, and before them Augustine, have seen and taught in agreement with St. Paul. In this way alone faith arrives at perfect rest and assurance. For our own individual moral conflict, for the edification and teaching of others, for our own ethical thought we require other trains of reasoning which guard our own sense of guilt and our consciousness of responsibility, and which summon our wills to strenuous endeavour. And yet if we fall into sin we know that God's hand was here, and that He willed to humble us by the fall; and if we have done anything that is good, it is surely to God that we must give thanks. Here we stand before insoluble problems; we need not wonder that even St. Paul failed in his attempts to solve them.

Such problems, with their intellectual difficulties, perplex us all, and still more than these the facts of life with which they deal, our own powerlessness, the superior force of sin, the impossibility of escaping from its influence, and of rooting it out of our nature—hence in all earnest souls there arises a yearning which can never be satisfied on earth, and which, perhaps, forms the noblest instinct of our human nature. St. Paul has ascribed this yearning to the whole of creation; the sufferings of the animal world, the struggle for existence among all living creatures, suggest such thoughts also to us. The world is not yet to

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us what it should be ; it is ever travelling in the pangs of a new birth.

The yearning for something better manifests itself in the whole of humanity. St. Paul, too, noticed this. In what he says of the moral conduct and the conscience of the Gentiles, he is more outspoken and fair than any other Jew, than many Christians, than the official teaching of the Church, indeed, than even he himself could be according to his own theory and his own practical teaching in the Mission.

We have elsewhere noticed how ideas and views of opponents, which St. Paul has undertaken to controvert, occupy his soul and become more and more attractive to him. Thus he, as a Jew, cannot acquiesce in the Greek's belief in a future life that is purely spiritual, and yet he almost entirely sacrifices the old body to his own and his opponents' intellectual demands, so that with him the old body only supplies the germ of the new body. It is true that St. Paul here never quite gets rid of matter ; even the new man has a " spiritual " body of heavenly light. Yet this clinging to the material is a property of all human thought and, even philosophically considered, is not necessarily a fault.

At the same time how mightily the Apostle strives to give the " Spirit " its right place ! We must, it is true, take care not to regard St. Paul's conception of the " Spirit " as coincident with

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what we speak of as "spiritual life." Yet the significance of St. Paul in the development of Christian thought becomes especially clear to us if we compare the "Spirit" which he knows and for which he would prepare the way, with those "spiritual" manifestations which were generally held in the highest reverence among Christians of those days, and which were not despised even by St. Paul. We mean those gifts of miraculous healing, of prophecy, and of vision, those stammering utterances and impetuous cries of ecstasy. According to St. Paul, the Spirit is not only the cause of such strange and violent spiritual phenomena, but is also that gentle influence whereby God inspires in us all that is good. In this Spirit St. Paul experiences a real fellowship with God, apart from any mediation; this Spirit is the same that is in Christ the Son; this Spirit testifies that he is a child of God; through this Spirit he is a fellow-heir with Christ in the family of God. This nobler mode of conceiving and realising the Spirit of God directly connects in St. Paul's soul with the feeling that this effluence from God is a breath of freedom, a fresh breeze of unrestricted life and free growth. Where it blows, there the Law and its letter have nothing more to say; there sin dies of itself; there grows of itself "the fruit of the Spirit"—above all, Love, which of itself fulfils the whole Law. With all this fulness of emancipating and energising life Christ now

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comes to His own: the Lord is the Spirit; but where is the Spirit of the Lord, there is liberty.

Wide though the chasm is that divides our world of thought from that of St. Paul, he nevertheless here reaches out a strong and helpful hand to all those who are contending for religious freedom, and for a spiritual conception of Christianity.

Finally, St. Paul is the prophet of a religion of the deepest, most absolutely spiritual communion with God, a religion that has divested itself of all forms of mediation; for he teaches that the time will come when even Christ will have accomplished His work, and that then God will be all in all.

These profound and precious truths did not arise in the Apostle's soul in the course of lonely and idle reflection. They are the product of a life abounding in action, wherein even the simple craftsman's labour for daily bread was not wanting, of a life oppressed by every kind of bodily and spiritual trial. His whole life stood in vital connection with and testifies to his thought and belief. Everything he says, even much which for most of those who repeat his words after him is forced and unreal, is true for St. Paul. At last, according to trustworthy tradition, he was enabled to bear witness by actual martyrdom to his faith in the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and to his fellowship in His life and death.



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St. Paul's outward life was an expression of his faith. And yet it must be a subject of continual wonder that this man, dead to the world, with his heart already in heaven, who is ever thinking of the second coming of Christ, who will have nothing to do with what is not absolute in thought, who lives and moves in a world of miracle, should in his letters to the Churches not only take trouble about every detail that concerned them, but should also deal with such questions with great common sense and careful regard to the actual conditions and circumstances of the Churches, never deceiving himself as to the presence of moral evils among "those called to be Saints" and "the members of the Body of Christ," nor, on the other hand, allowing such scandals to drive him to despair and to the renunciation of his ideals. Moreover, in all his arrangements for the organisation of the Church, he was always successful in treating every question, even the most trivial, from the loftiest standpoint; so that we now can still follow his decisions and his counsels with the greatest interest and inward profit, even where we cannot to-day put them into practice. Thus St. Paul's universal Church could be set up in the midst of this world, to be the salt of the world, without St. Paul's giving the slightest assistance or countenance to the spirit of worldliness, which was even at that time present in the Church.

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Whether he were giving advice on special questions, or were developing his grand conceptions, or describing his doctrine of Redemption, or contending with his opponents, or lovingly appealing to his listeners, St. Paul always knew how to draw from a language which was only a more cultivated form of the ordinary Greek of daily life, tones which forced their way into every heart. In spite of a frequent yielding to a tendency to give artificial point to his periods and a love of antithesis, and in spite of a vivacity of thought which often breaks through the bonds of logical connection, he was ever able to express what he wished to say, and the things that he had to say were weighty and difficult enough. He was the first Christian to discuss such things connectedly before the Greek world. Accordingly, he was compelled to create that language of his which has echoed down through the centuries and still sounds plainly and clearly even in our own discourse. Although he writes in prose his style here and there rises to a lyric strain of incomparable beauty. And yet he aims only at a mutual exchange of spiritual gifts; he cannot withhold his good counsel, but he speaks not as the inspired lord of the churches. The assured, self-confident tone of his teaching is mingled with expressions of humility, even of perplexity, and oftener still of thankful recognition of love that had been shown him. The genuinely human note

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of his letters touches our hearts; in St. Paul a living man stands before us, a man who with his human sympathy will ever make his intimate appeal to the heart of mankind.

### HOW CHRISTIANITY HAS BEEN HINDERED AND ENCUMBERED BY ST. PAUL

In spite of all that has been said, there is no doubt that St. Paul, with his peculiar personality, with his tendency to recondite Gnostic speculation and Rabbinical argument, has heavily encumbered the cause of Christianity. For many simple souls, and for many natures that are otherwise constituted than himself, he has barred the way to the simple Christianity of Jesus. This would have shown itself even in the Ancient Church, if at that time St. Paul had not been merely venerated and canonised and then passed by with a respectful bow. The Church delivered itself from the oppressive weight of the Pauline doctrine of Augustine by practical semi-Pelagianism—i.e. the doctrine of Pelagius, that man is by nature good and free, after having been condemned by the Church, was half admitted again. St. Paul's influence came to new life in Protestantism; here his doctrine of Justification, the heroic force of which few were capable of comprehending, was made the central point, here it continued to exist as a dogma, here starting as a

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saving truth it at last became a hindrance to faith. If by Pauline doctrine we mean the whole Christological and Eschatological system of which St. Paul is the chief exponent, then it is this doctrine which to-day blocks for many the approach to the childlike piety of Jesus, and which bars the way to God the Father.

This doctrine teaches that communion with God is afforded by the continual mediation of a Being in whom are united the antique conception of a Son of God, the Hellenistic conception of a nature half divine, half human, and the Jewish conception of the Messiah: a Being who has in himself no concrete human individuality and yet is not God, one who is at home only in Heaven, and is a stranger upon earth. In correspondence with such conceptions we find that Paulinism absolutely neglects the earthly ministry and genuinely human life of Jesus, apart from isolated sayings: that it connects the assurance of forgiveness exclusively with His death, that it interprets this death as an act of propitiation and part of a legal process between God and mankind as a corporate body. Again, in correspondence with the mystic conception of the Christ Who has passed from earth into Heaven, Paulinism combines Salvation with mystic rites, such as Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which have an actual sacramental efficacy of their own, though it is true that they presuppose religious and moral

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effort on the side of the participants. Then there are the short historical perspective which led the Apostle to cast such a cursory glance and to set so low value upon marriage and earthly calling, his acquiescence in the Oriental subjection of the woman to the man, his want of all innocent child-like joy in Nature and Life. The Christianity thus introduced by St. Paul is still true for many and will long be the shell of the Eternal, but the living kernel must not abide for ever in the shell; if it does there is danger of its being stifled therein.

## WHO WAS THE FOUNDER OF CHRISTIANITY?

### HOW FAR WAS ST. PAUL THE FOUNDER?

LET us now return once again to our original question : Who was the Founder of Christianity ? We now find that we are in a position to give an answer based upon a careful and just consideration of all the data. If by Christianity we understand faith in Christ as the heavenly Son of God Who did not belong to earthly humanity, but Who lived in the Divine likeness and glory, Who came down from Heaven to earth, Who entered into humanity and took upon Himself a human form that He might make propitiation for men's sin by His own blood upon the Cross, Who was then awakened from death and raised to the Right Hand of God as the Lord of His own people, Who now intercedes for those who believe in Him, hears their prayers, guards and leads them, Who, moreover, dwells and works personally in each of those who believe in Him, Who will come again with the clouds of Heaven to judge the World, Who will cast down all the foes of God, but will bring His own people with Him into the home of

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heavenly light so that they may become like unto His glorified body—if this is Christianity, then such Christianity was founded principally by St. Paul and not by our Lord.

Yet whatever view we take, whether we regard this form of Christianity as of the real essence of Christianity or not, in any case *we are far from being justified in speaking, without qualification, of St. Paul as the founder of Christianity.*

For in the first place the conceptions here employed were neither all created by St. Paul, nor was he the first to apply all of them to Jesus of Nazareth. All the Jews of his time expected the Messiah, the Judge of the World ; the Gentiles, too, of those days believed in and awaited the coming of a divine Saviour, the whole world believed in the propitiatory efficacy of a bloody sacrifice. The first disciples of our Lord held Him to be the Messiah, He Himself never repulses this faith of theirs. The Primitive Community had already surmounted the stumbling-block of the Cross by regarding the death of Jesus as a sacrifice for the guilt of Israel. St. Paul it is true wrought a work of tremendous historical importance in that he raised Jesus from the position of Jewish Messiah to that of the Divine Redeemer of the Gentiles and of the whole world, and set His act of propitiation in the centre of His whole ministry and of the history of the Universe, and therewith raised Christianity to the level of an universal

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religion bringing salvation to the whole world. Yet what he did was still only *one* decisive step forward on the way which the cause of Jesus had already taken, on the way which even without St. Paul already began to lead beyond the boundaries of Judaism. To this way he gave the direction for centuries—but since his time Christendom has for the most part gone its own ways; and these ways have, as a rule, widely deviated from the paths of such an one as St. Paul, indeed, have often run in quite an opposite direction.

Even in the period succeeding St. Paul Christianity did not become, as it were, a quantity fixed for all time. Just so surely as it is a living movement, belonging to the very life of men and nations, as surely is it subject to continuous change, as surely does it sprout forth into ever fresh shoots and blossom, does it enter into ever new relationships. Much wherein we must recognise the inspiring influence and the creative force of Christianity is quite independent of, indeed alien to the work and the thought of the great Apostle, who, with all his many-sidedness and greatness of soul, had his own peculiar limitations, and was far from containing in himself all that Christianity could and would afterwards become. The Christianity of an Augustine, of a Francis of Assisi, of the German mystics, of a Luther and Zwingli, of a Schleiermacher and Herder is not simply a further development of Paulinism, but appears as a dis-



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ting form with its own special value side by side with the form of which St. Paul was the creator and champion.

### JESUS THE FOUNDER OF OUR RELIGION

If we now ask what it is that holds together all the various shapes and forms which Christianity has called into being; what it is wherein consists the abiding, combining, all-dominating force and living principle of this religion; what it is that humbles the lofty and raises the lowly; what it is that ever opposes all that is lower and selfish, and that so heartily encourages, strengthens, heals, purifies, and gladdens all that is truly human in man; what it is that made even a Paul what he became—there is but one answer, the answer given by all the great confessors of Christianity: it is the Love, so sincere, so strong, which Jesus brought into the world; it is the Father Whom He has revealed to us and given to us. *Our religion in its essence is derived from Christ.*

Seeing that there is absolutely no dispute upon this point within Christendom itself, the question forces itself upon us whether we should not and cannot set the teaching and the human life and ministry of Jesus—in one word, the earthly human Personality of our Lord—in the place of the Pauline and ecclesiastical doctrine of the

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saving work of the supernatural Christ, and whether therein we have not the real essence of Christianity before us.

In this connection it is a most significant fact that in the New Testament, the gospels, which profess to tell us of the earthly Christ, stand before the epistles of St. Paul. It is true that the Christ of the gospels is also encompassed with miracle; He everywhere anticipates, both in word and action, the glory that was to come; more especially in the Gospel of St. John He is equipped with all the characteristics of an Incarnate God—but even this shows us what strong attraction the actual earthly life of Jesus possessed; even the Gentile Christian Church could not be satisfied simply with the Pauline Christ Who came down to earth only to die for sin. St. Paul boldly reverses the natural order, he demands that earthly men should imitate the Divine Christ, Who came down from Heaven and took upon Himself the form of a servant; the gospels have of themselves restored the natural order, namely, that we in our lives should imitate the earthly life and suffering patience of Jesus. And it is further most significant how throughout the whole history of the Church the imitation of Jesus, together with the profound occupation of the soul with His earthly sufferings, and above all and in all the contemplation of the whole Personality of that sincere and loving human

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soul, has represented a distinct stream, a distinct form of Christianity, of peculiar simplicity and force which holds the balance against the Pauline form.

Thus the earthly Jesus, and not simply the wonder-worker, but just the poor, the lowly, the suffering man in all His helplessness, has ever played His part in Christendom side by side with the Pauline Christ, though always against the background of His Divine origin and significance, and thus our remarks concerning the importance of the human figure of Jesus in the Church are completely justified. Moreover, we believe that we who trace back our religion, our relation with God, to the man Jesus, have a just claim to be included in the Christian body.

For God can only be brought near to us men, who with all our human limitations stand in the midst of the struggle of life surrounded by all the infirmities and trials of earth, without preternatural power and without miraculous knowledge of supernatural things, when He comes to us in a man who is not hindered from being truly man by a supernatural origin and supernatural endowments, who does not always know what is happening to him, who in time of trial and distress has not at his disposal infinite stores of miraculous power.

Such an one alone proves to us that God really can and will take up His abode in us, one in whose

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heart, though human, God dwells, one who feels himself supported and sustained by the love and power of the Almighty, and whose soul is itself full of sacred divine love.

One who amidst a world full of struggle and conflict, of care and distress, by the surpassing might of His own Personality, and by this alone, compels us to believe in a sacred power of Love overshadowing the Universe, One Who by His love draws us into that state of blissful love wherein we realise that we are God's own children and can become like unto Him—*He it is Who is the Founder of our religion*—and the more assuredly so if He is a real man and not a mere idea. For it is not ideas hovering over our heads that can help us, but only real forces which work with an energy of living influence from man to man, and establish in humanity, as it really exists, a living fellowship of love.

### ST. PAUL THE LIBERATOR

But ought we to bewail the fact that the portrait of the earthly, the human, Christ has not remained the sole one? How comes it that Luther sets the first three gospels below the fourth, and, above all, commends the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians as the really fundamental documents of Christianity? *Luther did not wish that the Christian should remain clinging*

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*to what was earthly and accidental* in Christ, what might also be strange and incongruous—Luther especially objected to the numerous miracles; we may add thereto our Lord's own belief in miracles, His eschatological views and His conception of the Messiah—Luther would rather direct us to the spiritual content and the eternal import of that which Jesus has brought us; this abiding content exhibited itself to him in the free grace of God offered to all who implicitly trusted themselves to it. For this conception he has to thank St. Paul.

And so we also should recognise that *St. Paul performed for us the service of a liberator* when he released us from bondage to those accidental limitations of the personality of Jesus which placed Him and held Him fast under the yoke of the Law, which confined His ministry to the chosen nation and within the boundaries of the land of Israel; we, too, must acknowledge that St. Paul brought the message of the love of God in Christ to the Gentiles, and thus also to us. Under this aspect, even what we before objected to in St. Paul is seen as a blessing.

For, as we have said before, St. Paul loosened the bonds which bound Christianity to Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, and therewith elevated Jesus to the level of a Divine mediator between God and the Universe; this also means for us that all those Jewish Apocalyptic expectations which Jesus

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shared and which were bound up with the Messianic idea, together with the Jewish Law, of which the Messiah was the champion and the fulfiller, now fell into abeyance, and that from henceforth the God of the whole world, and therefore our God, speaks with us through Christ.

Once again let it be emphatically admitted that St. Paul expressed all this in the forms of his times and according to the limitations of his own personality, and that nothing could be more perverse than to wish to make a new law out of the teaching and views of him who delivered us from all that was legal, earthly, and transitory in Jesus. Did not St. Paul himself recognise different forms of Christianity side by side with his own, and did he not hold out his hand to the first apostles who carried on the tradition of the earthly Jesus? He expressly set his own forms of doctrine side by side with that of an Apollos and of a Peter, and left all these forms of doctrine to the free choice of Christians: all is yours, says he, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or whoever else—all are yours; and ye are Christ's. He expressly and emphatically stated that he carried his treasure in earthen vessels, that his knowledge, like all human knowledge, was only in part, a seeing as in a mirror darkly.

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### ST. PAUL AS A MEDIATOR

It is accordingly certain that in St. Paul and his teaching, the religion which our Lord brought into the world, is delivered to us under only one form, and that a form by no means perfect though of the highest importance. When, therefore, we listen to St. Paul we must ever try to catch the voice of Him Whose character and Whose mighty influence speak to us also through the testimony of St. Paul.

Here, however, the watchword, "Back to Jesus from Paul," does not seem to me to express what is required of us. For in the first place, as we have been already forced to point out, there is much in the earthly Jesus due to the limitations of His times from which none other than St. Paul has delivered us; and, furthermore, we must remember that we never hear the actual voice of Jesus Himself, indeed, not even of those who had themselves seen and heard Jesus, but only of men who, like St. Paul, through the testimony of others, had so yielded to the captivating influence of Jesus that they, in their turn, became His witnesses. It is true that in quite another sense than St. Paul they stand in the full stream of the tradition which professed to hand down the record of the earthly life of Jesus, yet, on the other hand, in time they are further removed from Jesus than was St. Paul, and in some respects they are even inferior to

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St. Paul in their appreciation of the Jewish characteristics and national limitations of Jesus. In any case, we can only rediscover the portrait of the historical Jesus by methods of induction, and never with complete certainty. The one thing, however, which is absolutely certain is the tremendous impression which our Lord made upon His disciples. His was a mighty personal influence, which is still reflected to us from all these early witnesses of Christianity—the Evangelists as well as St. Paul.

### CONCLUSION

This mighty influence of sacred love, proceeding from Jesus, created in His own lifetime the belief in His Messiahship, and after His death the belief in His Resurrection; under these presuppositions it is alone possible to conceive the conversion and the work of St. Paul. Taking all this into account we are forced to the conclusion that Jesus alone is the real source and founder of the religion we profess and of the Christianity which arose after Him.

St. Paul, on the other hand, though not the sole founder was still the principal founder of that form of Christianity which alone proved capable of subduing the wide world to Christ, a form which in these days hinders and embarrasses us in many ways, and yet still sets before our eyes



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the world-embracing character and the eternal significance of the cause of Jesus, and at all events remains, and will ever remain, a mighty testimony to the power of the Spirit of Jesus in the history of mankind.

Seeing that this is so, it is for us always to search for and to catch this liberating Spirit of Jesus wherever it is at work, the Spirit which we have learned to know as a pure enthusiasm of love and of confident trust in God, as that mighty power of love which can hold us safe through time and in eternity.

Hereby we are also delivered from all anxiety as to historical research into the foundations of our faith. For that this Spirit is now present and is a source of true life is in truth no question of history. We do not mean that Christianity is thus divorced from the historical personality of Jesus. Love and Faith can only proceed from persons; and according to the unanimous testimony of St. Paul and the Primitive Christian Church these flowed from Jesus of Nazareth, from His life and His death.

We do not anticipate the results of historical research, we only show the way along which such research should be allowed to proceed undisturbed.

Meanwhile, to every simple Christian—among whom we theologians ought also to be numbered—there lies open the practical way by which we may be led through Paul, Cephas, or John, through

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Luther and Zwingli, through witnesses of ancient and modern days, through parents, teachers, and friends, through husband and wife, to true joyous love and faith, and to the unapproachable light of the noble and entralling Personality of Jesus, whence such joyous love and faith ever derive fresh sustenance. And whosoever abideth in this love, abideth in God and God in him.

But that we are able to do this to-day, we owe, above all, to St. Paul. Therefore let our motto be: Back through Paul to Jesus and God! and our conclusion: Paul—just one who points the way to Jesus and to God!

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